DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 873 CE 065 963

TITLE	Exploring Culture. Final Report.
INSTITUTION	Center for Literacy, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
SPONS AGENCY	Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	241p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC10 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Basic Skills; Blacks; *Cultural Pluralism; *Curriculum Development; English (Second Language); Females; Homeless People; Instructional Materials; Lesson Plans; Limited English Speaking; *Literacy Education; Material Development; Models; *Multicultural Education; State Curriculum Guides; Student Developed Materials
IDENTIFIERS	353 Project; *Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)

ABSTRACT

This document reports on a project conducted to develop a curriculum to enable adult learners to explore their own and others' cultures while participating in reading, writing, math, English-as-a-Second-Language, or social studies course offered by adult basic education providers throughout Pennsylvania. The curriculum manual in this report consists of an instructor's guide and 10 packets of learner-developed cultural materials. Included in the instructor's guide are the following: suggestions for using the curriculum, an overview of the cultural packets, two model lesson plans for teachers to use in helping classes identify, explore, and document class members' cultures, and the 10 student-developed cultural packets in which students document their own cultures through their own writings and art. Each of the 10 packets deals with the cultures of one of the following groups: West Philadelphians; homeless people; persons in recovery; Black women; grandmothers, mothers, daughters, and sisters; dreamers; math learners; learners of English; computer users, and workers. A 52-item list of recommended readings is provided. (MN)

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Final Report

Exploring Culture

Project #98-3012
Federal Funding $26,095

Fiscal Year 1993

The Center for Literacy
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to provide adult learners with the opportunity to explore their own and others' cultures. It worked with a broad definition of culture as the customs, experience, knowledge, and traditions of a given people. The "given people" whose culture was explored through this project are adult basic and literacy education learners.

The project was designed to allow learners to define and document their own culture. To do this, learners identified themselves as a group, explored the culture of that group, decided how to communicate their culture to others, and documented their culture.

The curriculum also provided an opportunity for learners to explore others' cultures as defined by members of that culture. In this phase of the project, classes used the materials developed by other adult learners to explore the cultures of the authors.

A curriculum manual was produced which consists of an instructors' guide and ten packets of learner-developed cultural materials. The instructors' guide explains how to use the curriculum with individuals who want to document their own culture as well as with those who want to explore the cultures of others. The cultural packets provide the instructional material for the latter activity.

The immediate audience for the project was adult learners in Center for Literacy classes. The curriculum is appropriate for use in instruction in reading, writing, math, English as a second language, and social studies by adult basic education providers statewide.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This project enabled adults with limited literacy and English skills to explore their own and others' cultures.

In the first phase of the project, staff developed an instructional model for working with students to identify, explore, and document their own culture. The model was field tested in five classes, revised, and field tested in an additional five classes. Ten student-developed packets were created. The process for developing cultural materials with adult learners was documented in a model lesson plan.

In the second phase of the project, an instructional model was developed for using the cultural packets with other learners interested in exploring the culture of the authors. This model was field tested with each of the cultural packets in an additional sixteen classes. This process was documented in a second model lesson plan as well as in ten individual lesson plans, one for each of the cultural packets.

Throughout the project, materials were revised based on the field tests. All materials were compiled as the Exploring Culture Manual.

TIME FRAME

This was a twelve month project, July 1992 through June 1993.

STAFF AND KEY PERSONNEL

The project director was Catherine DeLong Smith. The following classes developed and field tested the materials:

Blankenburg School Even Start class, Stephanie Hirsch, instructor;
Burns and Banks Human Services Shelter class, Bridget Perry, instructor;
Centro Pedro Claver class, Irma Torres-O'Brien, instructor;
Douglass School Even Start class, Stephanie Hirsch, instructor;
Germantown YWCA class, Matthew Smith, instructor;
Holy Apostles community class, Sandy Harrill, instructor;
Kearney School class, Roz Don, instructor;
Kingsessing Library Healthy Start class, Catherine DeLong Smith, instructor;
Manna Head Start, Maribel LeBron, instructor;
Nicetown Boys' & Girls' Club class, Anita Pomerance, instructor;
Northeast community class, Natalie Shapiro, instructor;
Pastorious School Even Start class, Stephanie Hirsch, instructor;
Point Breeze community class, Amy Mummert, instructor;
Red Shield Family Shelter, Joanna Carty, instructor;
Red Shield Family Shelter, Richland Goddard, instructor;
Rosenbluth Travel class, Monty Wilson, instructor;
Stearn School, Monty Wilson, instructor;
West Philadelphia community class, Sandy Harrill, instructor;
Workforce Education class, Amy Mummert, instructor.

AUDIENCE

The immediate audience for the project was adult learners in Center for Literacy classes. The curriculum is appropriate for use in instruction in reading, writing, math, English as a second language, and social studies by adult basic education providers statewide.

This project was funded by:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education
Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Permanent copies of the report will be on file for the next five years with:

AdvancE
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

BODY OF REPORT

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Culture, the customs, experience, knowledge, and traditions of a given people, is often described by individuals outside that culture. As a result, the description of a particular culture is limited by the framework of the culture of the outsider. This takes the ownership of one's culture away from the individuals in that culture. It reduces the group's power to define itself and decide how to portray itself to the world.

The first phase of this project placed the responsibility of documenting culture in the hands of the members of that culture. Classes of adult learners identified the group to which they belonged, explored the culture of that group, identified ways of presenting their culture to others, and documented their culture for their own and others' use. In the second phase of the project, other classes of adult learners used the learner-created documentation to explore the culture of the authors.

The Exploring Culture curriculum also meets a need for instructional materials which are appropriate both in content and readability for use in adult basic and literacy education programs. Learners and instructors found both phases of Exploring Culture to be engaging.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a set of generative themes and accompanying questions for exploring culture in literacy, ABE, and ESL classes.
2. To pilot the themes in 10 classes, with 100-150 learners, collecting materials, identifying resources, and answering questions.
3. To compile the results of the class activities in 10 individual packets.
4. To field test the process and packets with a second group of 100-150 learners.
5. To revise packets and compile a final curriculum.
6. To document the curriculum development and instructional processes for replication in other classes.

OBJECTIVES MET

Objective 1.

The following questions were developed to begin the process of exploring culture with learners:

- Who are we?
- Who are we as a community?
- What is our neighborhood? Is it an area of the city, or a particular place, such as a family shelter?
- Who are we as a class? Who have we become as a class in the time that we have been together?

The cultural themes that emerged were:

We Are West Philadelphians
We Are Homeless
We Are in Recovery
We Are Black Women - This Is Our Struggle
We Are Grandmother, Mother, Daughter, and Sisters
We Are Dreamers
We Are Math Learners
We Are Learners of English
We Are Computer Users
We Are Workers

Once the cultural themes were selected, a second set of questions was used to explore the cultures of the groups identified. There were some questions which were used across themes:

- What is it that makes us a member of this group?
- What do we know about our culture?
- What else would we like to know?
- What makes us special or unique?
- What would we like others to know about us?
- What do we know that would benefit others?
- What have we learned that we could share with others?

Other questions were specific to selected themes.

<u>We Are West Philadelphians</u>

- What are some things about your neighborhood that you would like others to know?
- What are some things that others assume about your neighborhood that might not be true?
  What would you like to tell those people?
- What are some things about your community or neighborhood that make you feel a part of it?
- What are some things that you do in your community that are special or specific to that part of the city?
- What other things, such as food, music, or customs, do you have in common with the rest of the community?

- Does your community do something special or is it known for something that is unique, such as a special festival, a famous sandwich shop, or a well-known garden?
- Is there any custom or tradition that is special to your community or neighborhood that you would like to pass on to the children in your community?

We Are Homeless

- What do you think of when you think of home?
- As a group, what do you have in common when you think about your home or your ideas of home?
- What are some of the differences that you see between your own and other's ideas about home and what home is?
- Where would you like your home to be?
- What are the things that you value most when you think about your own home?
- How does a community such as a shelter build a sense of home?
- What are some things that you need to know when you are new to any community?
- What experiences could you share with someone that would make their transition into a shelter more comfortable?
- What are some things that you like and dislike about where you are living?

We Are in Recovery

- What makes your group special?
- In your experience, what ways is this group similar to or different from other groups, such as those in your community or church?
- What knowledge can you share that could help others avoid some of the problems you have faced?
- How has the group helped you with some of your own problems?
- What are some ways you help others in your group when they are feeling down?
- What are some ways, such as journal writing or play writing, to tell your story?
- What advice do you have for your children or other people that you know?
- Are there other groups in your neighborhood with whom you can share some of your experiences?
- Can you find other groups throughout the city, state, or nation that might want to share some of their advice on recovery?

We Are Black Women - This Is Our Struggle

- What are some common experiences that you share with Black women?
- What are some common attributes and strengths that Black women share?
- The history that Black women share is rich with strong and determined women. Which women in history have had a particular influence on your life and why?
- What are some challenges Black women have faced in the past?
- What are some challenges Black women face in their day to day lives?
- How are these challenges the same as or different from the challenges that face all women?
- What are some of your hopes for your children?
- What are some of your hopes for yourself?
- What are some things about yourself and your group that you would like others to know?

We Are Grandmothers, Mothers, Daughters, and Sisters

- What are the relationships in your family? What makes you part of this group?
- How does the relationship between mothers and daughters differ from that of grandmothers and granddaughters?
- In what ways do you support each other within the family?
- Are there things about your grandmother, mother, daughter, or sister that you would like to change?
- Is your grandmother, mother, daughter, or sister an expert or are you an expert in anything that you would like to share with others?
- Is there anything, such as, baking, sewing, or automobile repair, that you have learned from an older family member and would like to share or teach someone?
- What is the importance of goals and values passed on from generation to generation or from similar group to similar group?
- For women: How do you as a grandmother, mother, daughter, or sister express your feelings about your role in your family?

We Are Dreamers

- What dreams or goals do you have in common as a group?
- Is there anything in your life that you have always wanted to accomplish?
- What do you know now that you didn't know when you were younger that could help you attain your dreams?

- Do you have any regrets about your life or ways in which you would want things to be different?
- What are some things that have gotten in the way of attaining your dreams on schedule?
- Do you feel that others have experienced similar obstacles?
- What can you do in your group to help yourselves reach your goals and dreams?
- What advice can you share with others so that they can benefit from your experience?
- Are there experts, such as job counselors or educational advisors, that your group could consult for more information to help you attain your dreams?

We Are Math Learners

- As a group, how do you work together to learn math? What makes a math lesson work for the group? How can you share this knowledge with other learners who might be struggling with math?
- As a community of math learners, how do you communicate to your teacher your math needs?
- Do you feel that you learn better in a group, and if so, why?
- What is it in a lesson that increases peoples' self-esteem?
- How do group activities, such as math games, help individuals learn from and teach each other?
- What is it in a math lesson that makes people feel uncomfortable or makes the group feel as if they are struggling?
- In what ways can your understanding of how you learn math help you understand how you learn other things, such as writing?
- What advice do you have for other groups of learners?

We Are Learners of English

- What would you like others to know about you as a group?
- What is it like to be a speaker of another language in a country where the majority of people speaks English?
- How is learning English in a group different from learning something else such as math?
- In what ways are people in your group similar to or different from each other?
- How are you similar to or different from the people in your neighborhood?
- When you are in your own neighborhood are services available to you in your first language? If so, how does this differ from other areas of the city?

- What are some of the assumptions that other people make about you because you have difficulty speaking English?
- What are some ways that you could educate others about your culture so that they would not make incorrect assumptions about you?

We Are Computer Users

- How do you use a computer?
- How has your use of computers changed over time?
- How do you think computers will effect us in the future, in education, our personal lives, and on the job?
- What are things that you did to become comfortable with using a computer that you can share with someone just beginning to use one?
- How would it be useful to keep a learning journal about either your computer use or some other learning experience?
- How could you share your computer knowledge with someone else?
- What would you recommend for a first time user to get started?
- What can your group do to develop and build on the knowledge that you now have?

We Are Workers

- What are some things that you now know about working that you did not know before?
- How have you changed as workers?
- What kinds of things are you able to accomplish as a group that you might not be able to do alone?
- Has working together made your job easier or harder and why?
- How have your day to day relationships changed with your co-workers?
- What things would make a new employee more comfortable and successful in his or her job?
- What did you have to learn the hard way about your job? How could someone else have made that learning easier for you?
- What things have you learned about working that you want to share with other workers?
- Are there experts, such as job counselors or educational advisors, that your group could consult for information to help you improve in your work life?

Objective 2.

The themes were piloted with 152 learners in 10 classes. To answer the questions, learners used their knowledge of their culture. They also identified any additional information they needed to understand their own culture better and determined how to find it.

After the group felt comfortable with their knowledge of their own culture, they began the process of documenting their culture in order to present it to others. Questions to facilitate this process included:

- How can we communicate who we are to others?
- What documentation do we have of our culture?
- What materials can we create to share our culture with others?
- How can we share our knowledge with others?

Learners chose the following ways to document their culture:

- Collecting their knowledge through group brainstorming.
- Writing about their personal experiences.
- Keeping journals to record progress in knowledge.
- Conducting research and documenting new information.

The processes of selecting themes, and exploring and documenting culture were open-ended and recursive, not locked in by the questions or the planned phases of the project. Classes took discussion of the questions in different directions. Some questions worked with one group; other questions worked with other groups. In some classes, the process went very smoothly. They were easily able to answer the question, "Who are we?" and they were clear about what they wanted to say about their culture. Other classes struggled with the process. The questions posed did not seem to work, and other questions needed to be generated to facilitate the process. Some classes started in one direction and changed course mid-way. Twice a class got

as far as developing materials and decided that they wanted to start over by redefining their group.

The classes created materials through group and individual writing. The materials created included class descriptions, lists, poetry, autobiographical sketches, journal entries, short essays, letters of advice, and class mottos. These materials were organized as instructional packets.

Objective 3.

The learner-developed materials were compiled in 10 cultural packets.

Objective 4.

A model lesson plan and ten individual lesson plans were developed for using the cultural packets with other learners. The process and packets were field tested with an additional 188 learners in 16 classes.

Objective 5.

The packets were revised based on the field tests and a final curriculum manual was compiled.

Objective 6.

Two model lesson plans were developed. One documents the curriculum development process and the other documents ways to use the cultural packets as instructional materials. Also, an individual lesson plan was developed to accompany each cultural packet.

OBJECTIVES NOT MET

All objectives of the project were met or exceeded.

EVALUATION

As stated above, all objectives of the project were met or exceeded. The project proposed to involve 100-150 learners in 10 classes in each of the two pilots. The first pilot was conducted with 152 learners in 10 classes and the second pilot with 188 learners in 16 classes The instructional materials were expected to be approximately 100 pages. The final product is 208 pages long. As proposed, ten packets were created and a curriculum manual was compiled. Both the process of developing materials with learners and of using these materials with other learners were documented in model lesson plans as proposed. In addition, an individual lesson plan was developed to accompany each of the cultural packets. Feedback from both learners and teachers was positive. Seven of the classes piloting materials chose to create materials of their own to add to the packet.

DISTRIBUTION

The manual and final report will be available to literacy service providers state-wide through AdvancE. It will also be shared through Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth through submission to their newsletter. The manual will be placed on CFL's list of publications which has nationwide circulation.

The project director will submit a proposal to present at the PAACE Midwinter Conference or the PDE Summer Institutes in 1994.

CONCLUSION

Culture, the customs, experience, knowledge, and traditions of a given people, is best described by individuals who share that culture. Allowing groups to define and document their own culture acknowledges their ownership allows them to decide how to portray themselves to the world.

Involving adult learners in the process of exploring their own culture is empowering for the reasons mentioned above. Further, it helps adults make connections between what they experience and know and what they see in print. Having learners create materials for use by other learners provides an audience for writing and makes revising and editing of writing a meaningful part of the writing process. Seeing their writings as part of published work demystifies both the writing process and printed materials for the learners.

Learners who use materials written by other adults find these relevant, interesting, and accessible. Knowing that the materials being used for instruction were developed by other learners opens up possibilities to learners and demystifies the writing process for them as well.

The following story illustrates the power of seeing one's words in print.

> The packet We Are Computer Users was desktop published and presented to the class that created it with the explanation that this was the final version of their work. As the learners looked through the packet, they were surprised to see their journal entries. It was explained again that these were their writings. With each turn of the page, they were surprised. When the class turned to Advice to First Time Computer Users, one class member speculated aloud, "This must be a list from the people who gave us the computers to use at home." As they began reading the list of recommendations, faces slowly lit up. Finally the same student noted aloud, "Hey, we wrote this, too!"

Exploring Culture Manual

Section 353 Project #98-3012

by

Catherine DeLong Smith
Curriculum Coordinator

with
Center for Literacy Learners

Rose Brandt, Director of Educational Planning

Jo Ann Weinberger, Executive Director

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July 1993

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Acknowledgments

This manual is the result of a collaboration of many adult learners and staff at the Center for Literacy who worked with the curriculum coordinator to develop and pilot these materials. Without their combined efforts, the creation of this manual would not have been possible.

The greatest contribution to this manual was made by CFL learners. It is their voices which bring life to these pages. Some created packets of materials to document their culture and share with others. Others field tested the materials, often adding to the packets in the process. Their instructors supported them in the process. Thank you to the following:

Blankenburg School Even Start class, Stephanie Hirsch, instructor;
Burns and Banks Human Services Shelter class, Bridget Perry, instructor;
Centro Pedro Claver class, Irma Torres-O'Brien, instructor;
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Rosenbluth Travel community class, Monty Wilson, instructor;
Stearn School, Monty Wilson, instructor;
West Philadelphia community class, Sandy Harrill, instructor;
Workforce Education class, Amy Mummert, instructor.

We would like to offer a special thanks to the Healthy Start class at the Kingsessing Library which the curriculum coordinator, Catherine DeLong Smith teaches, for their investment of time in this project. They developed the packet We Are Dreamers and field tested several packets developed by other classes. They also willingly supported their teacher throughout the development of this manual, offering their ideas and opinions of the materials. Finally, they presented their packet, We Are Dreamers, to a class of eighteen other adult learners.

Additional thanks are due to Rose Brandt, director of educational planning, who helped plan, guide, edit, and write this manual; Yvette Walls, CFL educator, who assisted in the initial planning stages of this curriculum; and Benjamin Burenstein from the Office of Computer Services at Drexel University for technical help in formatting this project.

The development of these materials was funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs.

Introduction

Culture is defined by Webster as the concepts, habits, skills, art, instruments, institutions, etc. of a given people. The "given people" whose culture is explored through this project are learners in adult basic and literacy education programs. This curriculum focuses on their customs, experience, knowledge, and traditions.

Cultures are often described by individuals outside that culture. The result is that the description of a particular culture is limited by the framework of the culture of the outsider. This takes the ownership of one's culture away from the individuals in that culture. It reduces the group's power to define itself and decide how to portray itself to the world. This curriculum is designed to help learners define their own culture and explore others' cultures.

In defining their own culture, learners identify themselves as a group, explore the culture of that group, decide how to communicate the culture of their group to others, and document their culture.

To explore the culture of others, classes use the packets developed by other adult learners to explore the culture of the authors. They may decide to add to the packets which they use or to create a cultural packet of their own.

Exploring Culture supports instruction in reading, writing, math, English as a second language, and social studies.

Description of the Project

This project, Exploring Culture, provided learners with the opportunity to explore their own and others' cultures. It worked with a broad definition of culture, focusing on customs, experience, knowledge, and traditions. It invited learners to answer the question, "Who are we?" in their own way, not limiting them by the perception and definition of an outsider.

Developing the Materials

In the first phase of the project the members of each participating class identified, explored, and documented their culture. To facilitate the identification part of the process, questions were posed that challenged learners to think of themselves as part of a group.

Once the members of the class had identified their group, the activities focused on helping them to explore the culture of that group, their customs, experience, knowledge, and traditions.

After the group felt comfortable in their knowledge of their own culture, they began the process of documenting their culture in order to present it to others. The classes created materials through group and individual writing. These writings were compiled as ten cultural packets.

Field Testing the Materials

In the second phase of the project, the materials were compiled as cultural packets and lesson plans were developed. Next, the

materials created by members of one class were field tested with the members of at least one other class to explore the culture of the authors. Frequently, as a result of field testing the materials, learners became involved in the process of developing additional materials and the packets were enriched as a result.

The curriculum was used for reading, writing, math, English as a second language, and social studies instruction. The overall approach was consistent with CFL's approach to adult education: whole language, holistic, learner-centered, and goal-related. Skills were taught opportunistically, that is those skills which learners needed were taught when the need arose.

All materials were revised based on the field tests and the Exploring Culture Manual was compiled.

Exploring Culture
Instructors' Guide

Using the Curriculum

Exploring Culture can be used for instruction in reading, writing, math, English as a second language, and social studies. It consists of:

- ten cultural packets, each documenting a learner-defined culture;
- a model lesson plan for use with classes of learners interested in identifying, exploring, and documenting their own culture;
- a model lesson plan and ten individual lesson plans for use with classes of learners interested in using the cultural packets to explore the cultures of others.

Instructional Model One - Documenting Culture

The first approach to exploring culture presented in this manual involves having classes of learners identify, explore, and document their own culture. This process, which was used to create the materials in the packets, is presented in Model Lesson Plan One - Documenting Culture which includes: questions to facilitate the process of answering the question, Who are we?; specific questions for exploring each of the cultures presented in this manual; and suggested activities for documenting culture.

Instructional Model Two - Using Cultural Packets

The second approach involves having classes use the existing packets as instructional materials to learn about the culture of the authors. This process, which was used to field test the materials, is

presented in Model Lesson Plan Two - Using Cultural Packets and in the individual lesson plans for each of the ten packets.

Adapting the Curriculum

This curriculum is meant to be used in ways that respond to the needs of the learners in the class being taught. This may require moving among packets and pulling aspects from the two models to provide the appropriate instruction.

Perhaps the best way to use the curriculum is to begin with an existing packet using instructional model two and, if learner interest warrants, move on to creating materials using instructional model one. Many of the individual lesson plans for using the instructional materials suggest creating materials as a follow up activity.

Overview of the Cultural Packets

Each packet begins with a description of the class which developed the materials. The second piece in each packet is a class motto. From that point, the content of the packets varies.

- **We Are West Philadelphians**

  This packet includes lists of childhood games, candies remembered, famous West Philadelphians, great hoagie shops, and more ideas that make this neighborhood special. A map of the neighborhood is also included.

- **We Are Homeless**

  This packet includes personal stories of how learners became homeless and what their idea of home is. Also included are stories describing life in a shelter and a list of things that make shelter life difficult.

- **We Are in Recovery**

  This packet uses the learners' own stories to tell of their struggles in recovery and lives on the streets and in shelters. The group together have written a letter to President Clinton and a check list with advice for other learners trying to live clean.

- **We Are Black Women - This Is Our struggle**

  This packet includes poetry and short autobiographical sketches from women and men about the struggle that African-American women have had to face in their lives.

- **We Are Grandmothers, Mothers, Daughters and Sisters**

  This packet includes personal stories about relationships between grandmothers, mothers, daughters and sisters and how those relationships defined the writers.

- **We Are Dreamers**

  This packet includes questions to inspire classes to consider why they are in class and to set goals for themselves. It also includes checklists, poetry, and personal writings about goals and dreams.

- **We Are Math Learners**

  This packet includes lists on topics such as ways to learn math and what makes math interesting to learn, a dialogue about homework, and math games to create and play.

- **We Are Learners of English**

  This packet includes a checklist of how to make new learners feel welcome, individual writings, and ideas of what it is like to be learning English as a second language.

- **We Are Computer Users**

  This packet includes specific checklists, vocabulary lists, an introduction to using computers, and a computer journal kept by the learners who developed the packet.

- **We Are Workers**

  This packet includes lists of what workers need to know in general and for the specific job of residential advisor. It also includes advice to learners in workforce education classes and

drawings of the class showing its members and their roles and relationships.

Model Lesson Plan One
Documenting Culture

The purpose of this lesson plan is to provide instructors with a model to use in classes for identifying, exploring, and documenting the culture of the class members. The model was field tested by several teachers in a variety of classes. The process for documenting culture differed from packet to packet because of the individual styles of instructors, differences among classes, and nature of the topic selected. Instructors should adapt the lesson plan to meet their needs and the needs of their classes.

Goals

- To identify who we are and what we have in common as a group.
- To explore the culture of our group.
- To recognize our knowledge of our culture.
- To identify additional information about our culture which we would like to obtain.
- To decide what we would like others to know about our group.
- To decide how to present this information to others.
- To collaborate in creating materials for sharing information.

Materials Used

- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

1. Begin a discussion to encourage the class to consider some ways to define themselves as a group. Ask the class to consider some or all of the following questions:

    - Who are we?
    - What is our community?
    - What is our neighborhood? Is it an area of the city, or a particular place, such as a family shelter?
    - What do we have in common that makes us special such as common history, music, food, clothing, or other customs?
    - What makes us unique?
    - Who are we as a class? Who have we become as a class in the time that we have been together?
    - What do we know that we would like to share with others?

    Have the group record the answers to the questions and any ideas which the questions bring to mind. Ask someone from the class to list this information on the board. Also ask one or more learners to record the lists from the board on paper so that these lists may be used later.

2. Ask the class to look at the lists and determine which themes occur most often. From these themes, ask the class to select one with which they identify as a class. It is important that the theme is one with which all class members are comfortable.

3. Once an identity has been agreed upon by the class, ask questions related to the theme. General questions which can be used in this phase of the project include:

    - What is it that makes us a member of this group?
    - What do we know about our culture?
    - What else would we like to know?
    - What makes us special or unique?

- What would we like others to know about us?
- What do we know that would benefit others?
- What have we learned that we could share with others?

Specific questions for the topics which were explored to produce the materials in this curriculum are listed in the section Questions To Explore.

Use the same process of someone recording on the board and someone else recording the information from the board onto paper.

4. Repeat the process as in step 2 above, reviewing the information on the board and noting which ideas occur most often.

5. Ask the group to make a list of things they would like to tell others about their culture.

6. Once this list is established, discuss methods of collecting or creating these materials. Questions to facilitate this process include:

    - How can we communicate who we are to others?
    - What documentation do we have of our culture?
    - What materials can we create to share our culture with others?
    - How can we share our knowledge with others?

The following can be used to document learners' cultures. They are all methods which were successfully used in this project:

- The class can collect their knowledge through group brainstorming.
- Individuals can write about their personal experiences.
- Journals can be kept to record progress in knowledge.
- Research can be conducted and the resulting information documented.

7. As ways are identified for documenting the aspects of their culture which the class members want to communicate, begin creating the materials.

   The writing process should allow for input from all members of the class. This can be achieved in the following ways:

   - Group writing

     The class can brainstorm what they know or want to communicate about a topic. One member of the class can record the information on the board. Another class member can keep a copy on paper for future work.

   - Individual writing

     Members of the class can write their own documentations of their culture. Assistance in writing can be provided as appropriate. Some learners might choose to work independently. Others might use the language experience approach to create their documentation with the assistance of a scribe.

8. Have the class review the materials as they are developed and/or as they are organized in themes.

   Materials created by the class can be typed and reviewed by the class at a later date.

   Materials created by individuals can be shared with classmates as they are developed.

9. When a first draft of the packet has been created, the class should review it and decide on steps to revise and edit the materials. Since the materials represent the culture of the group, the class members should raise any concerns they have about what is or is not in the packet. These materials could also be reviewed by a class editorial board if the members of the class like this idea.

After the class members revise and edit their own work, the concept of a field test and an outside editor should be discussed. Explain to the class that other learners will be using their materials and that this might give us some new ideas for the packet. Any agency standards for materials to be published should be explained. Also, learners should understand that their writings will be part of a larger publication. If the publishing process is explained to learners, they are more likely to accept any changes which might have to be made in their writings. Tell the class that the next time they see their work, it will look somewhat different based on the field testing and the work of the outside editor.

10. After the materials have been field tested and gone through a second edit, they should be submitted for a final review by the class that created them. At this point, explain any decisions which needed to be made, e.g., editing for length, deletion of expletives, spelling and grammar changes, or formatting decisions. Be sure to be open to input from the class members about the decisions which have been made. After a discussion of this draft of the packet, explain the next steps to the learners, what will be changed, what cannot be changed, and what decisions you need to think about. Thank the class members for their input and tell them that the next time they see their writings they will be published authors.

Exploring Culture

Questions to Explore

These questions were used with the classes which developed the cultural packets in this manual.

If a class chooses to explore one of the ten cultures represented in this manual, these questions will support their efforts.

Otherwise, these questions can be used as examples of the types of questions which can enable learners to explore their own cultures.

We Are West Philadelphians

- What are some things about your neighborhood that you would like others to know?
- What are some things that others assume about your neighborhood that might not be true?
  What would you like to tell those people?
- What are some things about your community or neighborhood that make you feel a part of it?
- What are some things that you do in your community that are special or specific to that part of the city?
- What other things, such as food, music, or customs, do you have in common with the rest of the community?
- Does your community do something special or is it known for something that is unique, such as a special festival, a famous sandwich shop, or a well-known garden?
- Is there any custom or tradition that is special to your community or neighborhood that you would like to pass on to the children in your community?

We Are Homeless

- What do you think of when you think of home?
- As a group, what do you have in common when you think about your home or your ideas of home?
- What are some of the differences that you see between your own and other's ideas about home and what home is?
- Where would you like your home to be?
- What are the things that you value most when you think about your own home?
- How does a community such as a shelter build a sense of home?
- What are some things that you need to know when you are new to any community?
- What experiences could you share with someone that would make their transition into a shelter more comfortable?
- What are some things that you like and dislike about where you are living?

We Are in Recovery

- What makes your group special?
- In your experience, what ways is this group similar to or different from other groups, such as those in your community or church?
- What knowledge can you share that could help others avoid some of the problems you have faced?
- How has the group helped you with some of your own problems?
- What are some ways you help others in your group when they are feeling down?
- What are some ways, such as journal writing or play writing, to tell your story?
- What advice do you have for your children or other people that you know?
- Are there other groups in your neighborhood with whom you can share some of your experiences?
- Can you find other groups throughout the city, state, or nation that might want to share some of their advice on recovery?

We Are Black Women - This Is Our Struggle

- What are some common experiences that you share with Black women?
- What are some common attributes and strengths that Black women share?
- The history that Black women share is rich with strong and determined women. Which women in history have had a particular influence on your life and why?
- What are some challenges Black women have faced in the past?
- What are some challenges Black women face in their day to day lives?
- How are these challenges the same as or different from the challenges that face all women?
- What are some of your hopes for your children?
- What are some of your hopes for yourself?
- What are some things about yourself and your group that you would like others to know?

We Are Grandmothers, Mothers, Daughters, and Sisters

- What are the relationships in your family? What makes you part of this group?
- How does the relationship between mothers and daughters differ from that of grandmothers and granddaughters?
- In what ways do you support each other within the family?
- Are there things about your grandmother, mother, daughter, or sister that you would like to change?
- Is your grandmother, mother, daughter, or sister an expert or are you an expert in anything that you would like to share with others?
- Is there anything, such as, baking, sewing, or automobile repair, that you have learned from an older family member and would like to share or teach someone?
- What is the importance of goals and values passed on from generation to generation or from similar group to similar group?
- For women: How do you as a grandmother, mother, daughter, or sister express your feelings about your role in your family?

We Are Dreamers

- What dreams or goals do you have in common as a group?
- Is there anything in your life that you have always wanted to accomplish?
- What do you know now that you didn't know when you were younger that could help you attain your dreams?
- Do you have any regrets about your life or ways in which you would want things to be different?
- What are some things that have gotten in the way of attaining your dreams on schedule?
- Do you feel that others have experienced similar obstacles?
- What can you do in your group to help yourselves reach your goals and dreams?
- What advice can you share with others so that they can benefit from your experience?
- Are there experts, such as job counselors or educational advisors, that your group could consult for more information to help you attain your dreams?

We Are Math Learners

- As a group, how do you work together to learn math? What makes a math lesson work for the group? How can you share this knowledge with other learners who might be struggling with math?
- As a community of math learners, how do you communicate to your teacher your math needs?
- Do you feel that you learn better in a group, and if so, why?
- What is it in a lesson that increases people's self-esteem?
- How do group activities, such as math games, help individuals learn from and teach each other?
- What is it in a math lesson that makes people feel uncomfortable or makes the group feel as if they are struggling?
- In what ways can your understanding of how you learn math help you understand how you learn other things, such as writing?
- What advice do you have for other groups of learners?

We Are Learners of English

- What would you like others to know about you as a group?
- What is it like to be a speaker of another language in a country where most people speak English?
- How is learning English in a group different from learning something else such as math?
- In what ways are people in your group similar to or different from each other?
- How are you similar to or different from the people in your neighborhood?
- When you are in your own neighborhood, are services available to you in your first language? If so, how does this differ from other areas of the city?
- What are some of the assumptions that other people make about you because you have difficulty speaking English?
- What are some ways that you could educate others about your culture so that they would not make incorrect assumptions about you?

We Are Computer Users

- How do you use a computer?
- How has your use of computers changed over time?
- How do you think computers will affect us in the future, in education, our personal lives, and on the job?
- What are things that you did to become comfortable with using a computer that you can share with someone just beginning to use one?
- How would it be useful to keep a learning journal about either your computer use or some other learning experience?
- How could you share your computer knowledge with someone else?
- What would you recommend for a first time user to get started?
- What can your group do to develop and build on the knowledge that you now have?

We Are Workers

- What are some things that you now know about working that you did not know before?
- How have you changed as workers?
- What kinds of things are you able to accomplish as a group that you might not be able to do alone?
- Has working together made your job easier or harder and why?
- How have your day to day relationships changed with your co-workers?
- What things would make a new employee more comfortable and successful in his or her job?
- What did you have to learn the hard way about your job? How could someone else have made that learning easier for you?
- What things have you learned about working that you want to share with other workers?
- Are there experts, such as job counselors or educational advisors, that your group could consult for information to help you improve in your work life?

Model Lesson Plan Two
Using Cultural Packets

The purpose of this lesson plan is to provide instructors with a model for using the cultural packets in Exploring Culture with their classes. The model reflects the experience of several teachers who used these materials in a variety of classes. Use of the materials varied from class to class. The model contains the key components of the lessons. The individual lesson plans show how the individual packets were used. Instructors will need to adapt the lesson plans to meet their needs and the needs of their classes.

Goals

- To explore who we are.
- To explore what it means to be part of a group.
- To investigate other cultures.
- To develop reading, writing, math, English as a second language, or social studies skills, as appropriate.

Materials Used

- Cultural packets.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

1. To begin the process, have a brief discussion in which the class members consider ways that they define themselves. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

- Who are we?
- What is our community?
- What is our neighborhood? Is it an area of the city, or a particular place, such as a family shelter?
- What do we have in common that makes us special such as common history, music, food, clothing, or other customs?
- What makes us unique?
- Who are we as a class? Who have we become as a class in the time that we have been together?
- What do we know that we would like to share with others?

Have one class member record the answers on the board and another record it on paper for later transcription.

Explain to the class members that they are going to look at some materials created by other learners who tried to answer these questions.

2. Have the learners look over the cultural packets from Exploring Culture and select a packet which interests the group.

3. At this point, use the individual lesson plan for that packet to continue the lesson. Then return to step 4 to finish the lesson.

4. At the end of the lesson, return to the questions posed in step 1 above and the transcribed discussion. Ask the class members if there is anything they would change in the list now that they have explored a different culture.

   If class members decide to use another packet, go back to step 2 above.

   If the class members decide to create additional materials for this packet or to document a different culture, refer to Model Lesson Plan One - Documenting Culture.

Exploring Culture
Individual Lesson Plans
for Using the
Cultural Packets

We Are West Philadelphians Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are in the context of our community and neighborhood.
- To investigate what makes a neighborhood special.
- To observe a specific community from within and study the dynamics and history of that community.
- To learn and practice map reading.

Materials Used

- We Are West Philadelphians cultual packet.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider ways to define themselves as a group. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

   - Who are you as a group? What are some of the things that make you special?
   - What are some of the things about your neighborhood that you would like others to know?
   - What are some of the things that you do in your community that are special or particular to that part of the city?
   - What are some things about your neighborhood that others from a different neighborhood assume that might not be true?
   - What would your like to tell those people?

2. After discussion, the class can begin by reading West Philadelphia Neighborhoods. Ask the following questions?

   - Within the city or town in which you live, do the areas have names and does your specific neighborhood have a name?
   - How can we investigate the history of the origins of those names?

3. Look at the map The Neighborhoods of West Philadelphia. Locate some of the neighborhoods mentioned. Practice reading and locating other areas on the map.

4. If possible, obtain a map of the town, city, or area of the city in which the class is located. Ask learners to identify and locate streets, parks, and other known landmarks in the neighborhood in which their class meets.

5. Read the posters West Philadelphia Hoagie Shops and Famous West Philadelphians.

   Discuss the following questions:

   - What are some of the things that you do in your community that are special or particular to that part of the city?
   - What other things, such as food, music, or customs, do you have in common with the rest of the community?
   - Does your community do one thing or is it known for one special thing that is unique, such as a special festival, famous sandwich shop, or well-known garden?
   - In investigating the history of your neighborhood, are there any famous or locally well-known people from your area?

6. Read Childhood Games from West Philadelphia and Candies from West Philadelphia.

- What are some of the things about your community or neighborhood that make you feel a part of it?

- Discuss comparisons from these two lists to reflect on experiences from your own childhood and how they reflect on the uniqueness of your neighborhood.

7. Ask the class to consider the following question:

   - Is there any custom or tradition that is special to your community and neighborhood that you would like to pass on to the children in the community?

8. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model.

   - Group writing

     a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner record everything on paper. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.

     b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

     c. The group can decide what they are now experts in and work together to write lists on different topics, such as advice or checklists for other learners.

     d. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

     e. Class members can contact ABLE classes in other areas of the city and exchange information, history, or letters that describe their neighborhoods.

     f. The class can write to neighborhood block captains and organize block parties in their neighborhoods, introducing different childhood games and other activities. The class can also notify

local newspapers of the event by writing a press release. Class members can also create posters announcing the event.

- Individual writing

  a. Class members can write their personal histories of the neighborhood.

  b. Class members can interview famous individuals in the neighborhood.

  c. Class members can submit writings about the neighborhood to local newspapers.

  d. After researching the history of the neighborhood, class members can document their research and create a history file for other classes to use.

We Are Homeless
Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are in a community.
- To investigate what makes a group unique.
- To observe the shelter community from within and study the dynamics of that community.
- To consider several definitions of the meaning of home.

Materials Used

- We Are Homeless cultural packet.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider how to define themselves as a group. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

   - Who are you as a group? What are some of the things that make you special?
   - What do you think of when you think of home?
   - As a group, what do you have in common when you think about your home or your idea of home?

2. After discussion, the class can begin by reading Where is Home, Trinidad, and What I think of When I think of Home.

   Ask the class to discuss the passages and consider the following questions:

- What are some of the differences that you see between your ideas and others' ideas about home and what home is?
- Where would you like your home to be?
- What are the things that you value most when you think about your own home?

3. Read How I Came to Live in This Shelter, In the Shelter, and Interviews with Shelter Residents.

   Ask the class to discuss the passages and consider the following questions:

   - How does a community such as a shelter build a sense of "home?"
   - What are some of the things that you need to know when you are new to any community?
   - How can members of a group make someone new to the group feel more comfortable?

4. Read Some Things That Are Difficult About Living in a Shelter. Ask the class to discuss the passage and consider the following question:

   - As a group, what are some of the things that you like and dislike about where you are living?
   - What kind of changes would you make in your living situation?

5. Read My Own Home and Moving In.

   Ask the class to discuss the passages and consider the following questions:

   - What changes have you made in you life?
   - What considerations did you take into account in reference to making a change in your life?
   - What challenges did you face when you made the change?

6. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model.

   - Group writing

     a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner acts as the class recorder and writes everything down that is on the board. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.

     b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

     c. The group can decide what they are now experts in and work together to write lists on different topics, such as advice or checklists for other learners.

     d. The class might want to work together to construct their own set of rules based on their experiences of living together in a group, e.g., in a shelter, or a family.

     e. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

     f. Class members can interview each other and other residents of the shelter and write up the interviews and share them.

     g. Class members might want to start an in-house newsletter within their shelter.

   - Individual writing

     a. Class members can write about their personal knowledge of the homeless situation, e.g., their interactions with homeless on the street or through a meals program or the history of how they or someone they know came to live in a shelter.

b. Class members might prefer to write in a personal journal about experiences that they might not want to share with others in the group.

c. Class members can interview each other about their life experiences.

d. Class members can contact area homeless activists groups and write to local, state, and national legislatures concerning laws, aid, and benefits for the homeless.

7. After reading the writings in Moving On, the class can practice reading classified ads for apartments and houses for rent or for sale.

   - Practice role playing talking to a real estate agent, what questions to ask and what expectations, such as references, the agent might have of the potential client.

We Are in Recovery
Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are within a community.
- To investigate what makes the group unique.
- To observe the culture of Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous from within and study the dynamics of the group.
- To develop advice for other learners.

Materials Used

- We Are in Recovery cultural packet.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider how they define themselves as a group. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

   - Who are you as a group?
   - What makes your group special?
   - In your experience, what ways is this group similar to or different from other groups, such as in your community or church?

2. Read My History, My Insanity, and I Was Powerless.

   Ask the class to discuss the passages and consider the following questions:

   - How do people fool themselves?

- What do you have insight into now that you used to fool yourself about in the past?
- Has a community or group helped you with some of your problems?
- What are some of the ways you help others in when they are feeling down?

3. Read Something Went Wrong, Staying Drug-Free, Steps, and 13th Street.

   Ask the class to discuss the passages and consider the following questions:

   - What avenues are open to you to tell your story, such as newspaper stories, community meetings, youth groups?
   - Are there groups in your neighborhood with whom you can share some of your experiences?
   - Can you find other groups similar to your neighborhood group throughout the city, state, or nation that might want to share some of their advice on recovery?

4. Read to My Unborn Child, Some Advice to Share, and My Advice.

   Ask the class to discuss the passages and consider the following questions:

   - Have you thought about the larger scope of the drug issue - how it has affected your life?
   - How will you talk to your children about drugs?
   - What advice do you have for others, such as your children or young people that you know?

- What knowledge do you as a group have that you can share that could help others avoid some of the problems you have faced?

5. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model.

   - Group writing

     a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner acts as the class recorder and writes everything down that is on the board. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.

     b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

     c. The group can decide what they are now experts in and work together to write lists on different topics, such as advice or checklists for other learners.

     d. After reading To the President, the group can work together to write a letter to politicians and legislators about drugs and their ramifications for the learners' community and their lives.

     e. The group can also write advice to others about their experiences in recovery or meeting some other challenge in their lives.

     f. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

     g. Play writing can be an interesting and challenging medium for a group to explore a common theme. The group or volunteers from the group, could research play writing and set design at their local library branch.

- Individual writing

  a. Class members can write about their personal histories of how they came to be in recovery or how they met some other challenge in their lives.

  b. Class members might prefer to write in a personal journal about experiences that they might not want to share with others in the group.

  c. Class members can interview each other about their life experiences.

  d. Class members might also be interested in establishing a writer's network with other groups who share experiences with recovery. Short stories, plays, letters or novellas can be co-authored.

We Are Black Women - This Is Our Struggle Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are in a community.
- To investigate what makes a group unique.
- To explore Black women's own descriptions of their common attributes, strengths, and experience.
- To identify stereotypes and develop strategies for overcoming them.
- To consider the history of Black women.

Materials Used

- We Are Black Women - This Is Our Struggle cultural packet.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider how to define themselves as a group. You might also want to read the poem, On Being a Black Woman. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

   - Who are you as a group? What are some of the things that make you special?
   - What are some experiences that you share with the author of On Being a Black Woman?

2. After discussion, the class can begin by reading all or several of the writings of their choosing from the packet.

   Ask the class to discuss the passages and consider the following questions:

- What are some of the common attributes and strengths that the authors feel Black women share?
- The history that Black women share is rich with strong and determined women. What women in history have had a particular influence on your life and why?
- What are some of the challenges Black women have faced in the past?
- What are some of the challenges Black women face in their day to day lives today?
- How are these challenges the same or different from challenges that face all women?
- What are some of your hopes for your children?
- What are some of your hopes for yourself?
- Are there things about yourself that you would like others to know?

3. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model.

   - Group writing

     a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner acts as the class recorder and writes everything down that is on the board. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.

     b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

     c. The group can decide what they are now experts in and work together to write lists on different topics, such as advice or checklists for other learners.

d. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

e. As a group, the class can write to influential Black women who are political, church, or community leaders and request that they come to speak to the class. The class members can also put together a press release for local newspapers to notify them of the event.

- Individual writing

a. Class members can write about their personal histories.

b. Class members can choose different Black women in history who have influenced their lives or women who they would like to know more about and research there lives at the library. After doing the necessary research, the learners could write about the women's lives or write an imaginary letter to the women and share these with the class.

c. Class members might prefer to write in a personal journal about experiences that they might not want to share with others in the group.

d. Class members can interview each other about their life experiences.

e. Class members can write to a younger family member or community member and relate a personal experience about their own struggle.

We Are Grandmothers, Mothers, Daughters, and Sisters Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are and how our relationships within a family help to define us.
- To investigate what makes the family group unique.
- To observe relationships among women in a family.
- To study family history.

Materials Used

- We Are Grandmothers, Mothers, Daughters, and Sisters cultural packet.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider how to define themselves as a group. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

   - Who are you as a group? What are some of the things that make your group special?

   - What is your family like as a group? What are some of the relationships you have in that group?

2. After discussion, the class can begin by choosing to read any of the writings in the packet.

   Ask the class to discuss the passages and consider the following questions:

- How do you as a grandmother, mother, daughter, or sister express your feelings about your role in your family?
- How does the relationship between mothers and daughters differ from that of grandmothers and granddaughters?
- Are there things about your grandmother, mother, daughter, or sister that you would like to change?

Consider how we share information from generation to generation and explore the following questions:

- Is your grandmother, mother, daughter, or sister, an expert or are you an expert in anything that you would like to share with others?
- Is there anything that you have learned from an older family member that you would like to share or teach someone, such as baking, sewing, or automobile repair?

4. In talking about the relationships between family members, learners might want to consider the following questions.
   - In what ways do you support each other within your family?
   - What is the importance of goals and values passed on from generation to generation or from similar group to similar group?
5. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model.
   - Group writing
     a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner acts as the class recorder and writes everything down that is on the board. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.

b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

c. The group can decide what they are now experts in and work together to write lists on different topics, such as advice or checklists for other learners.

d. Class members can collect information from family members and compile a family history or possibly a cookbook.

e. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

f. Class members can also write a family newsletter, gathering news from other family members. The newsletter can then be sent to other family members who might otherwise have difficulty staying in touch.

- Individual writing

a. Class members can write about their personal histories and the histories of their grandmothers and mothers.

b. Class members might prefer to write in a personal journal about experiences that they might not want to share with others in the group.

c. Class members can interview each other and other family members about their life experiences.

d. Learners can interview their grandmothers, mothers, daughters, or sisters and record their perspective on these relationships.

We Are Dreamers
Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are in a community.
- To investigate what makes the group unique.
- To investigate a community of individuals who are pursuing their dreams.
- To explore our own dreams.
- To identify what can keep us from fulfilling our dreams.

Materials Used

- We Are Dreamers cultural packet.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider how to define themselves as a group and to discuss their dreams and goals. The class might want to read Building on a Dream. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

   - Who are you as a group? What are some of the things that make you special?
   - What dreams or goals do you have in common as a group?
   - Is there anything in your life that you have always wanted to accomplish?

2. Read My Dream Is..., Attain Your Dreams, Things That Get in the Way, and Be Good to Yourself.

Ask the class to discuss the passages and consider the following questions:

- As a group, what do you know now that you didn't know when you were younger that could help you attain your dreams?
- Do you have any shared regrets about your life or how you wanted things to be different?
- What kind of changes would you make in your life if you had it to live over again?

3. Ask the class to choose any of the individual writings and discuss some of the following questions:

   - What are some of the things that you have in common as a group that have gotten in the way of attaining your dreams on schedule?
   - Do you feel that others have experienced similar obstacles?
   - What can you do as a group to help yourselves to reach your dreams and goals?
   - What advice can you share with others so that they can benefit from your experience?

4. Discuss plans for the future and set short term goals. The class might want to consider some of the following questions during their discussion:

   - Are there experts that your group could consult such as job counselors or educational advisors who could help you reach your dreams?
   - What challenges do you see yourself facing to meet your goals?
   - What plans do you have to overcome obstacles which might get in the way?

- What will it feel like when you meet your goal?

5. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model.

   - Group writing

     a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner acts as the class recorder and writes everything down that is on the board. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.

     b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

     c. The group can decide what they are now experts in and work together to write lists on different topics, such as advice or checklists for other learners.

     d. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

     e. The class members can collaborate on creating an on-going goals list, keeping track and acknowledging accomplishments as they happen.

     f. Class members can research the lives of men and women who inspire them and write about their lives, sharing the stories with other classes.

   - Individual writing

     a. Class members can write about their personal histories and their own dreams and goals.

     b. Class members might prefer to write in a personal journal about experiences that they might not want to share with others in the group.

c. Class members can interview each other about their life experiences, what keeps them on track of their goals and what has gotten in the way of their dreams .

d. Class members can write to professional groups who might be able to speak to the class about professional development, job counseling, or opportunities in higher education.

We Are Math Learners
Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are within a community such as a class.
- To investigate what makes the group unique.
- To observe a specific class from within and study the dynamics and learning process of that class
- To analyze methods for learning and teaching math.
- To learn how to create games of math problems.

Materials Used

- We Are Math Learners cultural packet.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider how to define themselves as a group. The class can read About Math and discuss one or all of the following questions:

   - Who are you as a group? What are some of the things that make you special?
   - How do you feel about math?
   - How do you feel about working either in a group or with one or two other members of your class on math?
   - Do you feel that you learn better in a group, and if so, why?

2. Allow the class to choose the materials that they would like to read, choosing from Ten Things That Help, Math Homework, Things That Make Math Interesting, and What We Don't Like.

   Ask the class to discuss the learner's quotes and consider the following questions:

   - As a group how do you work together to learn math?
   - What makes a math lesson work for the group?
   - How can you share this knowledge with other learners who might be struggling with math?
   - As a community of math learners, how do you communicate to your teacher your math needs?

3. Ask the class to read Math Games and consider the following questions:

   - What in a lesson makes self-esteem rise within the group?
   - How do group activities with math, such as math games, help individuals learn and teach others?
   - What makes a math lesson uncomfortable and makes the group feel as if they are struggling?
   - How can some of these things that you learned together be transferred to how you learn other things, such as writing?

4. If interested, have the class play some of the math games. Have a class member takes notes on any variations developed or ideas for new games tailored just for their class.

5. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model.

- Group writing

  a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner acts as the class recorder and writes everything down that is on the board. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.

  b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

  c. The group can decide what they are now experts in and work together to write lists on different topics, such as advice or checklists for other learners.

  d. The class can write directions to math games that they like to play or they can try their hands at creating new games.

  e. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

  f. Class members can also write to other ABLE classes and share ideas, concerns, and issues about learning math

  g. Class members could start a math newsletter with tips and stories about learning math.

- Individual writing

  a. Class members can write about their personal learning histories of how they came to this point in their lives and some of their personal feelings about math..

  b. If class members have children, they might want to write to them and tell them about understanding their feelings about learning math.

  c. Class members can interview each other about their life experiences in reference to learning math and detail that process.

d. Class members with children could try the games they created as a class. The game can be rewritten for use with children of different ages.

We Are Learners of English Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are within a community.
- To investigate what makes the group unique.
- To observe a community of individuals for whom English is not the first language from within and study the dynamics of that community.
- To inform others about the uniqueness of the culture of the class.

Materials Used

- We Are Learners of English cultural packet.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities:

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider how to define themselves as a group. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

   - Who are you as a group? What are some of the things that make you special?

   - What would you like others to know about you as a group?

2. Ask the class to read the following writings: Just People and English Is Not My First Language, and consider some of the following questions:

   - According to the authors, what is it like to be speakers of another language in a country where most of the people speak English?

   - In what ways are people in your group similar or different to the authors?

- What are some of the assumptions that other people make about people who do not speak English well?

3. Ask the class to read the following writings: Our Customs at Christmas and Dances from the Philippines

   - What are some of the ways that you could educate others about your culture so that they would not make incorrect assumptions about you as a group?

   - How are you similar or different from the people in your neighborhood?

   - When you are in your own neighborhood, are services available to you in your first language? If so, how do these differ from other areas of the city?

4. Ask the class to read English Class, Our Class, and How We Make People Welcome and consider the following questions:

   - How is learning English in a group different from learning something else such as math?

   - How do you represent your culture within the class or group?

   - What would you like another class to know about you?

   - Are there any special projects that you could develop to share with another class?

5. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model.

   - Group writing

     a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner acts as the class recorder and writes everything down that is on the board. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.

b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

c. The group can decide what they are now experts in and work together to write lists on different topics, such as advice or checklists for other learners.

d. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

e. Class members can contact other English as a Second Language classes and begin a pen-pal relationship.

f. Class members could write about different customs surrounding one particular holiday and compile an information booklet which they could then share with new class members or members of other classes.

g. Class members could create a bilingual packet by writing their materials in both English and their first language.

- Individual writing

a. Class members can write about their personal histories of how they came to live in either this particular country or area of the city.

b. Class members might prefer to write in a personal journal about experiences that they might not want to share with others in the group.

c. Class members can interview each other about their life experiences.

d. Class members could write letters to friends of family members who might still be in their original country.

e. Class members could connect other class members with someone from another country to establish pen-pals.

f. Class members could write about when and in what circumstances they prefer to use their first language such as when talking to an older family member or expressing an emotion. They could also write about when and why they speak English, such as a visit to their children's school or during English class.

We Are Computer Users
Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are within a community.
- To investigate what makes the group unique.
- To observe a community of new computer users from within and study the dynamics of that community.
- To investigate how we learn new and technical information.
- To construct definitions of terms used with computers.
- To develop strategies for reading and writing.

Materials Used

- We Are Computer Users instructional packets.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider how to define themselves as a group. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

   - Who are you as a group? What are some of the things that make you special?

   - Computers do many different things. How do you see yourself using a computer?

2. Read Class Journals, Comments about Using the Computer, and How Do We Feel about Computers and consider the following questions for discussion:

   - How do you feel about using a computer?

- Do you use computers differently than before, say three months ago?
- How would keeping a learning journal either about your computer use or something else that is new to you be helpful?
- How do you think computers will affect us in the future, in education, personal use, and on the job?

3. If interested, the class can choose to read Advice to Computer Users, Checklist for Home Computer Users, and/or Vocabulary for Computer Users and discuss the following questions:
   - Are there different things or activities that you did to become comfortable with using a computer that you can share with someone just beginning to use one?
   - How could you share your knowledge about the computer with someone else?
   - What would you recommend for a first time user on how they could get started on a computer?
   - What can your group do to develop and build on the knowledge that you now have?
4. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model
   - Group writing
     a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner acts as the class recorder and writes everything down that is on the board. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.
     b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

c. The group can work together to write lists on different topics concerning computers, such as advice or checklists for other learners.

d. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

e. Class members can continue their research about computers and compile information relating to their experiences.

f. Class members can contact a local university and investigate the possibility of a computer expert giving a workshop to the class. Class members could then write a letter requesting the workshop. Also posters, written on the computer, could announce the event.

g. The class could create posters or information sheets to be displayed in agency computer centers or in classrooms.

- Individual writing

a. Class members can write about their personal histories of how they decided to study computers and begin to use them.

b. Class members could write in a personal journal about their day-to-day experiences using a computer, allowing them to check on their progress.

c. Class members can interview each other about their computer use.

d. Class members could use the computer to write personal and business letters, resumes, and other written documents that they might not otherwise write.

e. Class members can use portfolios of their computer work to evaluate their progress in computer use and in writing.

We Are Workers
Lesson Plan

Goals

- To explore who we are as a community.
- To investigate what makes the group unique.
- To observe a community of workers from within and study the dynamics of that community.
- To observe how we work together on the job and in class.
- To share advice for effectiveness on the job.

Materials Used

- We Are Workers cultural packet.
- Writing paper, pens, pencils, blackboard.

Activities

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To begin using the materials, ask the class to consider how to define themselves as a group. Some or all of the following questions may be helpful:

   - Who are you as a group? What are some of the things that make you special?

   - What do you know about the world of work?

2. Read Passing on the Tips of the Trade, Workers Need to Know, Residential Advisors Need to Know, and What We Have Learned and consider some of the following questions for discussion:

   - What do you have in common with the authors?

   - Did you learn anything new from the readings?

- What things about work do you now know that that the authors didn't mention?
- If you have worked with others on a job or project, what kinds of things were you able do by working together that you might not have been able to do by yourself?
- Do you think that working together makes a job easier or harder and why?

3. Read Who Are We and as you reflect on the drawings, consider the following questions:
   - How have your day to day relationships changed with your classmates?
   - How have you as a group changed?
4. Read I Didn't Want to Be Here, Learning the Second Time, and Advice from Our Class and discuss the following questions:
   - As a group, can you identify different things that would make a new employee more comfortable and successful in his or her new job?
   - Is there anything that you wished you had known about that you had to learn the hard way in life?
   - What things do you know about working that you want to share with other people?
5. A variety of writing exercises can be done using the packet as a model.
   - Group writing
     a. The class can record the answers to some of the questions that they have previously discussed. One learner should record the answers on the board while another learner acts as the class

recorder and writes everything down that is on the board. Later this can be used to create a packet for the class.

b. A class motto can also be created after discussion of the readings.

c. The group can decide what they are now experts in and work together to write lists on different topics, such as advice or checklists for other learners who are working.

d. If the class members create their own packet, they might want to teach it to another class and assist the members of that class in developing their own materials.

e. Class members could collect writings about their work experience and compile a newsletter to share with other workforce education classes.

f. As a group, the class could write to a professional group to come and speak to their class.

g. The group could write to other workforce education classes and exchange ideas, concerns, and experience.

h. The class could submit some of their writings for publication in an in-house newsletter at their workplace.

- Individual writing

a. Class members can write about their personal work histories.

b. After writing personal work histories, class members could use this information to create resumes.

c. Class members can interview each other about their work experiences. Different topics could be investigated, such as an embarrassing moment, why never to be late for work, or how to ask for a raise.

d. Class members can keep a daily log of their work experiences. They can then refer to this log during a job performance review,

outlining different tasks performed during the course of their work.

e. Class members can make a list of personal work related goals for learning.

f. Class members can map out their career to-date and their future career plans. This could be done using a time line, idea mapping, or prose.

Exploring Culture

Cultural Packets

We Are
West Philadelphians

- Class Description
- Class Motto
- West Philadelphia Neighborhoods
- What We Like

  What We Like about Living in West Philadelphia
  List of Hoagie Shops
- What We Remember

  Childhood Games
  Candies
  Famous West Philadelphians

We Are West Philadelphians
Class Description

We are a class that lives and meets in West Philadelphia or West Philly as we call it. We are nine "lifers" (twenty years or more living in W. Philly), six newcomers, and two visitors from other parts of town. A lot of us know each other from the neighborhood.

In nearly every class session, we read something together. Usually, it's a story or article. We read a book called Ellen Foster by Kaye Gibbons this year. We plan to begin reading Waiting to Exhale by Terry McMillan soon. A class session might also include work on writing, math, spelling, or grammar.

There is a great range of ability levels in our class. For example, some students are learning algebra and some are learning division. Similarly, some are ready to take parts of the GED test and some need to work on their reading skills before testing.

Members of the class are supportive of each other. We consider ourselves a close group - we're always throwing birthday parties for each other. The way the class celebrates each other is perhaps our greatest asset.

West
Philadelphia –
Filled with Friendly
People and Good
Memories.

West Philadelphia Neighborhoods

West Philadelphia has many neighborhoods within the area. Most of the neighborhood names relate to their location. Sometimes neighborhoods have their own names. Here are a few of their names:

Bartram Village	Powelton Village
The Bottom	Spruce Hill
Black Oak	Squirrel Hill
Cedar Park	University City
Mantua	Overbrook

- N -

THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF WEST PHILADELPHIA

- W -

- E -

- S -

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What We Like About Living In West Philadelphia

"People in West Philadelphia are friendlier."

"I like the way people hustle in West Philly. There's always a way to turn a dollar, earn a little money - like the flea market at 49th and Spruce."

"The [public] transportation here is good. You can go anywhere that you need to."

"We have lots of hospitals - Presbyterian, Misericordia, Veterans' Administration, University of Pennsylvania, and Children's Hospital. Oh, and the big emergency room for your pets at U. of P."

"Churches are happening in W. Philadelphia."

"We have parks - Clark Park at 42nd and Baltimore, Black Oak at 52nd and Pine, and Cedar Park at 50th and Baltimore."

"There is a lot of community gardening - mostly vegetables, but flowers, too. Also, we have more trees here than South Philadelphia."

In West Philadelphia we like to eat and the first thing we think of when we get hungry are all the good hoagie shops. Here is a list of our favorites:

Wurst House - 43rd & Baltimore

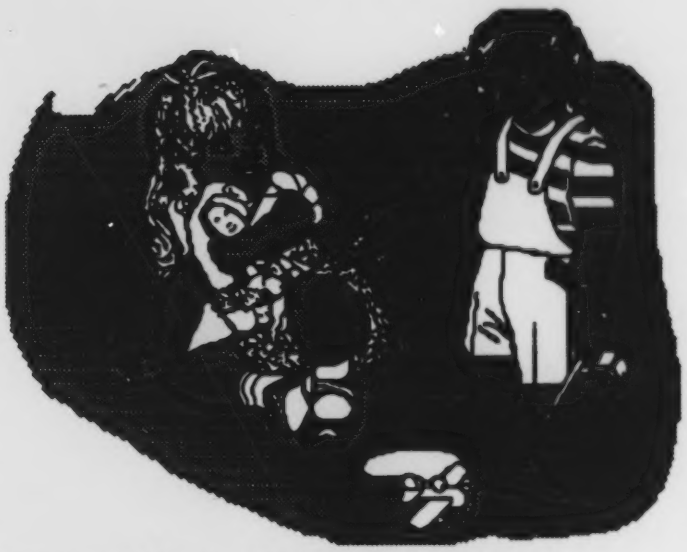
Jim's - 61st & Callowhill St

Italian Kitchen - Baltimore Pike

Ralph's Steak - 52nd & Girard

Ray's - 55th & Pine St

Abner's - 38th & Chestnut



Childhood Games from West Philadelphia

Many of us are not too old to remember some of the games we played while growing up in West Philadelphia. Here are some of our favorites. These games might be familiar to you, but perhaps you have different names for the games. No expensive equipment is needed to have fun playing these games!

- **Truth or Dare**

Remember this one?

How To: Ask your friend (or enemy) "Hey is it true that this, that and the other?" or "I dare you to ..." Some examples: "Hey, is it true that your girlfriend goes out with my brother?" or "I dare you to cross the bridge with one hand behind your back and on one foot." This game can have some unexpected consequences and as one person told us, "This could turn into a fighting game." Fighting games were very popular in West Philadelphia.

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• **Dozens**

This is another favorite West Philadelphia game, but CFL learners and staff from all over the country claim to have played this.

How To: Start by telling a friend, " Your mother ...!" and counter that with "Oh yeah, well your mother...!" Example: "Your mother wears army boots." "Oh yeah, your mother's so ugly they had to adopt you." You can see how this game can quickly escalate into a fighting game.

• **Catch a Girl, Kiss a Girl**

This game can also turn into a fighting game if the girl doesn't want to be playing.

How To: The girl runs, the boy runs after the girl, catches the girl, kisses the girl.

• **Hot, Cold Butter Beans, Come and Get Your Supper**

We didn't have to wonder too hard how this game got it's name.

How To: Someone hides a piece of rope or belt. Whoever finds it, gets to chase the other kids and try to hit them or catch them. We prefer the catch version.

• **Baby In The Air**

This is another game that was played for hours with different versions of how far away you could be when your number got called.

Equipment needed: Small to medium sized ball.

How To: Each person in a circle has a number. Someone is "it." Everybody runs in all directions. The person who is "it" throws the ball in the air and says, "The baby's in the air for number _____." The person whose number is called has to run back and try to catch the ball. Some versions have players spread all over a yard, street, or playing field and when a number is called the player has to run a great distance to try and catch the ball. A player can run too far and not get back in time to catch the ball when their number is called. If the player misses the ball, then they are out of the game for one round.

Another version: Everyone huddles together. When the ball is thrown into the air everyone runs as far as possible. The player who catches the ball yells, "Stop!" Everyone has to freeze. The person who catches the ball gets to take three steps and throw the ball at someone. If he or she hits that person, then that person is "it."

- **Ding Dong Dixie or Ding Dong Bell**

No one is sure where this game got its name but it was a lot of fun. The class that remembered this game suggested that playing this in today's cautious world could have different consequences than 30 years ago when some of them played.

How To: Go to a friend or enemy's door. Ring the door bell. Run like crazy or hide in a bush and watch the person who answers the door. Watch to see if they are aggravated. Give them just enough time to shut the door, relax in a chair, or start the dishes. Ring the bell again. Run fast. Here is another idea: Do it on a cold night so that they will close the door behind them. Grease the knob before ringing the bell. They might get locked out!

• **Devil and The Egg**

Another game with a wonderful name!

How To: One person is the Door and one person is the Devil. The Door has everybody standing or sitting in front of him. The Door also gives everybody a color.

The Devil knocks on the Door's back and they have the following conversation:

Door: Yes, who is it?

Devil: I'm the Devil.

Door: What do you want?

Devil: I want an egg.

Door: What color?

Devil: I want a red egg.

Whoever is the red egg, jumps up and starts running and if the Devil catches that person, they go to the Garbage Can which can be any designated area. If the egg runs back to the door without getting caught, the Door puts them safe in the Sugar Can. Someone from the Sugar Can gets to be the Devil and another gets to be the Door during the next round.

• **1, 2, 3, Red Light, Green Light**

This could often keep children playing for hours.

How To: One person is "it" and turns his or her back on the group. Calling out, "1, 2, 3, Green Light," everyone gets to run towards the person who is "it." "It" yells, "1, 2, 3, Red Light" and turning quickly around catches anyone

who is still moving. Anyone caught moving is called out. Anyone who is able to run all the way to the "it" person and tag them is now "it."

Statue is another version of this game. Someone is "it." They yell, "Go." Everyone runs, "it" yells "Freeze like a statue." Everyone except "it" has to freeze in exactly the position he or she was in when "freeze" was yelled. Holding awkward positions makes this more fun. The first one to move is then "it."

- **Buck, Buck**

This game was described as a "guy thing" by some West Philadelphia men; however, this was quickly refuted by the women in the class who said that girls played this game also.

How To: One person braces himself or herself, bent over holding on to and facing a wall. The next person braces himself or herself behind the first person. This continues until one team has a strong enough "wall." The opposing team yells, "Buck, buck number 1 coming in." Number 1 then jumps on top of the back of the "wall" and then number 2 does the same and so on until the backs of the "wall" team breaks.

- **Squeeze the Lemon**

A very easy game.

How To: A large group of children or adults all try to squeeze together and "mush" each other up into a small space. Sometimes one person "pops" out. Keep squeezing until someone screams that they are going to be "squashed to death!"

- **Simon Says**

Ahh...Simon says, "What would summer be without a rousing six day marathon of Simon Says?"

How To: One person is Simon and gives directions, such as "Simon says to hop on one foot." Everyone must follow every direction given that begins with the phrase "Simon says..." If you move when a direction is given such as, "Now hop on the other foot," (without the preface of "Simon says...") you are out of the game. The last person remaining who hasn't made a mistake, wins and gets to be Simon.

Childhood Candies from West Philadelphia

Little Dots on the Paper
Jaw Breakers
Squirrel Nuts (caramel and nuts)
Sweet Tarts
Mary Janes
Flat Licorice
Wax Soda Bottles
Kix Caramels
Pixie Stix

Famous West Philadelphians

Wilt Chamberlain
Patti LaBelle
Smokey Robinson
Jazzy Jeff
Fresh Prince
Boyz II Men
Georgie Woods
Gene Banks
Holly Robinson
Evelyn "Champagne" King
Black Magic
Stanley Clark
Becky Birtha
Sandy's Class

We Are Homeless

- Class Description
- Class Motto
- Where Is Home?
  - Poem - Trinidad
  - What I Think of When I Think of Home
- Life in the Shelter
  - How I Came to Live in This Shelter
  - In the Shelter
  - Interviews with Shelter Residents
  - Some Things That Are Difficult
- Moving On
  - Getting It Started
  - My Own Home
  - Moving In

We Are Homeless
Class Description

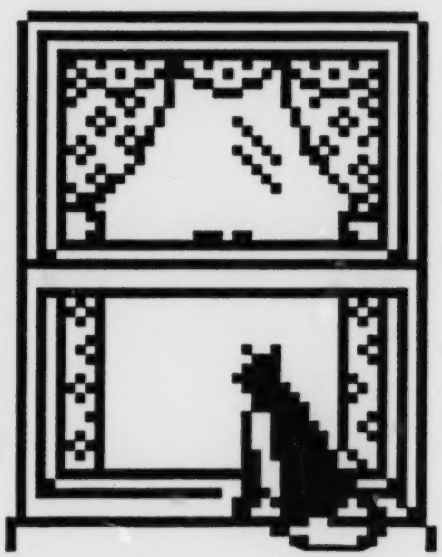
Karlene, Maxcine, and Myrtle live at a family shelter in Philadelphia. In developing this packet, they and others described what they thought about when they thought of the word "home."

They also wrote about life in the shelter, some of the good things and some of the things that make shelter life hard, such as not being able to cook their own food. One woman is getting ready to move into an apartment and said that the people at the shelter and the shelter program assisted her in putting her life together but she hasn't learned to cook yet. Another woman also felt that the shelter home has given her an opportunity to stop and sort things out in her life. She is an active member of the shelter and participates in community meetings. Several of the women have their children with them as do many other men and women in this family shelter.

Listening to

each other,

we can learn.



Where Is Home?

Home is Liberia. Before the war, Liberia was in peace. Now there is war in Liberia. We were free in Liberia until there was war. I like Liberia because you can still live with your mother, even when you are older.

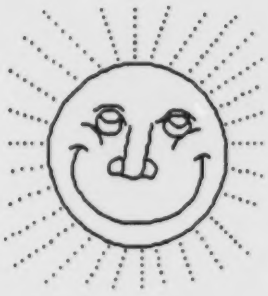
- Rose

To me, home is were I live, which is West Philly, but I am most comfortable in South Philly. I grew up in South Philly and I enjoyed it a lot. Coming up in South Philly was not always good. I was the last of seven girls and one boy. When we moved from South Philly I was 11 years old. Also, growing up in South Philly, my family was very close. Now we are not close. I miss that a lot. My father still lives in South Philly. I go in to see him. South Philly is not like it used to be.

- Lydia

I remember growing up in Africa and my Aunty not feeding me for two days because she thought that I had stolen candy. It was my cousin who had stolen it. I also remember going outside of our village to plant food one summer and when I got back my Aunty said that I was too old now to go to school. I was nine years old.

- Musu



Trinidad

Sweet, Sweet Trinidad.
You can go to the beach,
Lay on the sand in the sun,
Feel the waves running through your body,
Smell the breath of fresh air,
While listening to the echo of the music and dancing, eating,
drinking and having fun with the rest of the people there.
Then Calypso, Calypso, this is real fun.
You can dance and drink wine, till morning come.
You can drink and have fun all day long.
This is the land of Sweet, Sweet, Trinidad.

-Euphemia

What I Think of When I Think of Home

I think of a two story house with three bedrooms, a nice living room, dining room, kitchen, a big back yard, and a nice big cellar. I want flowers in the front and grass. I can plant the flowers and mow the grass - I can do it all.

Home is raising your children, teaching them how to go to school, showing them that there is a lot in the world that they can do with their lives, that there are things that they can see and places to travel to if they finish school. I also want to show them that there's a lot of love in this world.

- Maxcine P.

I would like my home to be in Jamaica again. After I work and make enough money, I will go back. I want my home to have four bedrooms for my children. It will be on the hills and the dining room will have a glass window to see the cars passing by. There will be a garden in the front and I want two bathrooms and antique furniture in the house.

Home is where I live at now. That's what I think, but most of all my home is Jamaica. Because I was much happier there. My other three kids, my sister, my brother, and my mom are there. I have a lot of friends back there, too.

You have a lot of fun in Jamaica. You can go to the country. There are a lot of beaches and parties and people that I like.

- Karlene M.

How I Came to Live in This Shelter

I had a hard life when I was in Jamaica. I was from Kingston. My family's poor and things are expensive there and I had to start working when I was nine and go to school at the same time. I was nineteen when I came here. My father sponsored me. He is in Connecticut. I had to move away from him because of some bad memories of him from when I was small.

I came to Philadelphia to live with my aunt and uncle. At first I enjoyed myself living with them until I got involved with an American guy. They didn't like him. I got pregnant and they didn't want me living in their house anymore. I had to leave and that's why I ended up in the shelter. When I go to work and save up enough money, I'm going to go back to Jamaica. It's my home.

- Karlene M.

When I came here I hurt. My mother had died and I had given up with my life and I had started drugging really bad. Then I couldn't take it anymore, and I needed help. I spent one night at Shirley (another shelter) and God placed me here. For that, I'll always be thankful.

- Maxcine P.

In the Shelter

I moved into the shelter because I lost my house. I lost my house because I had a bad drug problem.

When I first got here I didn't like it at all. I was around a lot of people I didn't know. There were a lot of rules to follow. I was used to doing what I wanted to do when I wanted to do it. Since I had a drug problem, they said I had to go to meetings. I didn't want to go at first, but now I like going. The meetings are helping me learn how to stay clean and how to live without the use of drugs.

Living in the shelter has turned my life around for the better. I am also learning about some of the reasons why I started to use drugs.

So now I am happy that there are places like Perkins Morris. It helped me save my life but I can't wait to get my own house.

Theresa R.

Interviews with Shelter Residents

What do you think about living here?

Living here has helped me a lot. It helped me to discover me in a lot of ways. Since I've been here I've learned about me a lot. I've learned how to read again and write and I learned how to live on life's terms without drugs. I learned how to talk to people when I have problems. I learned life isn't hard. I learned that life can be fun. Here, I've learned what togetherness is about.

I learned how to face up to the things that I don't know how to do. Some things I won't be able to change in life but I have to go on.

I learned that no matter what, I don't have to get high. I go to meetings here and outside. I go to group therapy and I have one-on-one to talk about my problems. I have come a long way and I'm happy I came here because they've truly helped me.

- Maxcine P.

How do you feel about being here?

I don't like living here. It's a good place for most people but it's not my lifestyle. But they do have a lot of programs here and a lot of people are here to help you succeed in life.

Just the thought of being in a shelter is very depressing. It's like a house but you can't cook your own food. I miss cooking my food. I like

curried goat and I don't like the way they cook their fish or beans and rice. I steam my fish with a lot of spices. I also make roast fish with okra and vegetables.

- Karlene M.

What's it been like here for you and your son?

I've been here for 19 months and I'm just getting out. I thank God for the Salvation Army because I don't know where I would have gone after detox.

When you live here, all you have to pay is a shelter fee and put money in a savings and you get to keep your food stamps. So why complain about the food when you have your food stamps? I take my son down for breakfast but we're not always here for lunch and dinner.

I want to move on. I think I'm ready to go live life on life's terms now. I've built up support and I'm in school for my GED. All that comes from being here and doing the things I have to do. Next Thursday is Malik's birthday and I'll be able to have a cake for him and a c-l-o-w-n. It's a surprise.

- Malik O. age 4
and his mother, Myrtle F.

Some Things That Are Difficult about Living in a Shelter

There are a lot of rules at our shelter and some of them we don't like. If we break any of the rules we could be written up or evicted if we have been written up before. The rules are here to protect everyone but here are a few of the things that we don't like:

- No eating after 10:00 P.M. Meals are at 8:00 A.M., 12:00 noon and 4:00 P.M. We aren't permitted to eat in our rooms or in the recreation room.
- No smoking in our rooms.
- No visitors in our rooms. Visitors can visit downstairs one hour per person.
- No visitors downstairs after 9:00 P.M. and no visitors upstairs. Our children must live here to visit upstairs. Other children are not permitted.
- No fighting or arguing. Anyone involved in a fight or argument can be thrown out of the shelter. Sometimes it is not our fault and we can't prevent someone getting angry.
- No music in the recreation room.
- We must be back in the building at 10:00 P.M. on weekdays and 12:00 midnight on weekends. Lights are out at 12:00 midnight, and there are no televisions or radios after that time.

There are other rules. Different shelters have similar but different house rules.

Getting It Started

On Wednesday of last week, I did something that made me feel really good about myself. I had to go to OSHA to pay my shelter fee.

A caseworker came out and called me. We went to her office to talk. I took the two money orders out of my purse and gave them to her.

She said, "Miss Reed, did they come and give you the check?" I told her "no." Then she got up and went to get the check for me. When she came back and gave it to me, I had to take it to the projects to pay them for the back rent I owed them.

When I left OSHA, I went straight to the projects. I gave it to the secretary and she gave me my receipt for it. I left the office feeling really good. I was so happy - I finally took care of that. I still have some money in my savings.

Now all I have to do is save up about $300 more in order to move out of the shelter. I have been living there for a year now.

- A.S.

Note: OSHA - Office of Services for Homeless Adults

My Own Home

I hope I am moving as soon as possible. I can do what I want to in my own house. My children said to me, "Mom, I want my own room."

I am not having any man live with me!

Monday night my boyfriend said to me on the telephone, "Karen, baby, I want us to be a family right now. That's why I want to live with you, Karen, baby. I can help you with the rent, too. I'm afraid you might want someone else to live with you."

I want my own home!

- Karen

Moving In

Moving into my new house was a mess. The day we moved, no one was around to help. My mom and her friends helped move everything out. It took us two days to get everything settled.

When we first moved in, there was ugly paneling on the walls. We had to paint over it. We painted it an off-white. Everything else looked nice and after we painted the paneling, it looked much better. Now it's the way everybody wanted it to be.

I have my own room and the children have theirs. My room is big and very comfortable. Every room in the house is nice. Whenever someone walks in our house they say, "It's so big and nice. I know that you are all glad." We agree and shake our heads, "yes."

In our old house we didn't have a shower and now we have one here and I love it. It feels so good. It's nothing like taking a bath. I'm so happy we have this house and all my family is, too.

- Kisha S.

We Are in Recovery

- Class Description
- Class Motto
- Our Stories
  - My History
  - My Insanity
  - I Was Powerless
  - Sick and Tired
  - Something Went Wrong
  - Staying Drug-Free
  - Steps
  - 13th Street
- Advice
  - To My Unborn Child
  - Some Advice We'd Like to Share
  - Some Advice to the President
  - My Advice

We Are in Recovery
Class Description

Our class meets in our shelter twice a week. The members of the class are also residents at the shelter which is only for those who are in recovery from drugs or alcohol or both. In class, we are working on different things, such as reading and writing, but we also talk and write about our life experiences.

Recovery is getting healthy and staying clean, putting your trust in God, and living one day at a time. We like to say that we are living life on life's terms. We are coming to grips with what we have done with our lives and the shelter has helped us in different ways, from allowing us to be in support groups to being able to study for a GED with this group.

It is an important step in recovery to tell our stories to each other and to people outside of our group. To accept our addictions helps us to move on and work on our goals. We are hoping that our stories will help us and others to understand the struggle we have begun.

We are in recovery–

We need to tell our stories.

My History

Well, for me, my life was hard because I had a bad experience in my life. My father did not want me and my mother took care of me all my life. When I came to Philadelphia, I got on crack cocaine and I became a cold-blooded hustler. I overdosed and almost died.

I am going to make the best of this program.

- Sylvia W.

My Insanity

When I started smoking cocaine I thought that I controlled it. Around 1990, I started noticing that I couldn't stop when I didn't have anymore money. I started tricking because a lot of men always wanted to get with me. I started taking them up on their propositions, making $40.00 and up. This went on for about a year and then the prices started going down. Once in a while I would get a good paying customer and I had my own apartment and it would be a regular thing with them.

It got so bad I would be schiz. My brains were really fried. Then I thought to myself that I needed some help, but I didn't get any right away. The next thing I knew I was stealing my boyfriend's microwave oven. It was brand new. I also stole a 19" color T.V. and a stereo set. After that, I knew I had do something, so I called Presbyterian Hospital and here I am thanks to God. I dream of becoming a licensed practical nurse. I don't ever want to go back to what was.

- Gale W.

I Was Powerless

To realize I was powerless over my addiction I had to admit to myself that I needed help. I had to have an open mind and willingness to listen. I told people what I wanted to tell them and not the truth and that's why I kept relapsing. When I started telling the truth, the more I talked, the easier it got. I'm learning how to live life on life's terms without drinking or drugging. I'm learning to talk about anything I'm going through whether it's small or big - I'm not scared to talk about it.

- Fred

Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired

I was on drugs. At first, I enjoyed using drugs. I liked the high but it got to the point where it wasn't a pleasure. I had to use it. I became addicted. How did I get here at this shelter? I got sick and tired of being sick and tired and I realized I was powerless and I needed help.

Once I came here, I kept relapsing and I couldn't understand why. It was because of something that I didn't talk about. I started going to N.A. meetings and started listening. I started hearing other people's stories about their lives. I heard that it was O.K. to tell my story. I had been afraid to tell my story because they would laugh or think I was a weirdo.

I didn't care what people thought. Each time I spoke it got better and better and it got easier.

- Fred

Something Went Wrong

It happened in my addiction. I lost control of myself. I was neglecting my children, so someone called DHS on me and they came into my life. After that I wasn't any good because I couldn't stop using and DHS gave me a chance to get clean. But I kept pushing them away. Then they told me to get in a rehabilitation program. I didn't, so they got worse with me and took my children away.

I got here because I want help. I want to stop hurting. After I lost my children, I had nothing to live for. A woman saw me in pain and told me to come into the Lord's House and pray. The Lord lifted my spirits, and the people in the church helped me to see clear again. They helped me get into the fellowship of N.A.

I want to be able to get my children back and be a responsible mother to them and I also want to go back to work.

My dream is to become a computer operator and to buy a home in the country for me and my children and some day visit Jamaica.

- Brenda

Staying Drug-Free

I once was living in Serenity House and I was 54 days clean and some problems started getting me thinking that I can make it on my own. When I was out, I found out that it's a lot of hurt and shame, a lot of pain and I failed my course. Along with that, I thought I could do things for my family.

There was a lot of pain in that I knew I couldn't make it. I finally realized I needed to start back where I came from. I hope to give myself a break this time. I'm going to start off doing the right thing from here. I truly see that I'll make it this time.

- Raymond

STEPS*

This past weekend I went over to my sponsor's house. We went over my fourth step and I did the fifth step. I felt really good being there with her and two other women. After I finished my work with her, all of us sat around the table talking about what was going on with us. We also went over a couple of things that we needed to know.

I never really talked about my feelings to people before. Now I am not afraid to do it. There are a lot of things that I have to work on that have something to do with myself. I have to work on my anger. That was a problem I had when I was using drugs and it still is. I have to turn it into something positive that will help me.

So my way of dealing with it is talking about it to other people. I also pray to God and ask Him for His help. I don't like being like I used to be.

-Theresa

*The writer is referring to the steps of a twelve step program such as Narcotics Anonymous.

13th Street

I was sleeping on 13th street in the concourse. The hardest part was getting enough food. I'll be clean 2 months next Friday. I got myself clean, out on the street.

Being here in the shelter is cool. For one thing, I like the people here. The staff is very nice and they have an ear to listen to you. I never had that growing up. My father's the only one in my family who has anything to do with me. That's why I love him to this day. I don't have any brothers or sisters.

The reason I call Tanya my sister is because we live together. We can call each other sisters because we went through the same things, the same family problems. I didn't know that - I thought I was the only one that had problems like that with my family.

When I came on drugs it seemed like my whole world turned upside down. I lost my son when DHS came and got him. I couldn't do anything but cry because it seemed like my whole world came to an end. I think about him and every time I do, I just get frustrated. Now God's giving me a second chance at being a mother and I just thank Him for it. If it wasn't for Him I'd be still out in the street with an unborn child and my empty life. I just thank God for bringing me here to get my life together.

- Shana

Advice to My Unborn Child

When your friends say that they are your friends, play with them and talk to them. When they want to know if you like to get high, you say "no."

If you do drugs, the only thing it's going to get you is into trouble. You could end up living on the street or even end up selling your body for drugs or you could be raped. You will be out on the street, nowhere to go, just like me. It was no fun being out there on the street, trust me, I know.

- Shazhett B.

Some Advice We'd Like to Share

- If you haven't tried drugs, don't. Learn from other people's mistakes. Our lives are no joke.
- If it happened to us, it will happen to you.
- It's your life you're playing with. You might think you can control it, but it controls you.
- Parents: Listen to what DHS says to you. You might be able to prevent them from taking away your children. They'll give you a chance.
- When you become an addict, living in society becomes hell!
- **Remember**... With drugs once is too much and a thousand times is never enough.

Some Advice for the President

Something has to happen. Look around our cities - they are in ruins and your people in these cities and everywhere are in ruins, too. Everything is suffering because of drugs. Our educational system, our family life, our time to relax is affected.

Drugs and violence have ruined our lives. We need to wake up and see who really is getting rich from drug dealing and smuggling. It's not the people who voted for you. Please do something as quickly as possible. It doesn't feel as if we have much time left.

CFL Small Group
Burns And Banks
Human Services Shelter
West Philadelphia

My Advice

Advice to those young people out there in the world who are like me: "Don't ever mess with drugs, they're no good. Stay in school and live a wonderful life without drugs. I'm only 21 years old - don't be like me and become a stupid addict. Live happy!"

- Donald T.

We Are Black Women - This is Our Struggle

- Class Description
- Class Motto
- Poems

  On Being a Black Woman
  The Black Woman's Struggle

- Our Own Stories

  This Life Is a Struggle
  Today's Black Woman
  We Have the Right to Go Forward
  Our Struggle
  Respect
  The Most Precious Thing
  We Can Do It
  Salute to the Black Woman

We Are Black Women - This is Our Struggle
Class Description

The Job Training Partnership Act State Education Grant Class of Germantown, Philadelphia, chose to write material on the strength and accomplishments of Black women. We are seventeen women and two men. Audio-visual aids such as the Billie Holiday Story, The Color Purple, Aretha Franklin's Story, and the story of Mother Hale were used to stimulate discussion before we began to write.

This class is an Education for Work program lasting 10 - 20 weeks, 20 hours per week. The class is a higher level ABE class with many learners already having their high school diploma or preparing to take the GED exam. The intensity of the class is created by the number of hours that the class works together sharing the common goal of being ready to enter a job-training program within a short period of time.

The focus on their goals and the many hours that they spend together weekly helped the class feel comfortable enough to develop a packet that was not only a difficult one, but also one filled with risks for the class as they attempted to understand the struggles of the Black woman.

Be determined, strong, and educated so that our sisters' struggle will be lighter than ours.

On Being a Black Woman

On being a Black woman, you muster up
Strength, no matter the task before you.
Hope for a brighter future, even
though the skies are grey, not blue.
You juggle many problems at once, head on.
Meanwhile you approach
a sunless morn, raising your children,
never feeling smothered, when your
own dreams are trapped and are covered.
The love of the Lord and prayer you instill,
but you never forget to hide
what you feel.

Pamela H.

The Black Woman's Struggle

A woman of strong determination
from the beginning of time.
Free inside her mind to let her thoughts run wild,
yet under siege in the world around her.
She struggles to keep her head above the water,
not only for herself,
but for all women of her same color.
She fights long and hard for social,
economic, and educational rights.
Because of her color it is so easy
for others to lose sight.
She remains determined, strong and educated
so that her sister's struggle will be lighter than hers.

- Sandra F.

This Life Is a Struggle

For me to say as a Black woman that I am struggling is just putting it lightly. My mother has struggled and her mother has struggled and the list goes on and that is something that has gone on for generations.

A Black woman's struggle is not just her financial problems. It also deals with keeping herself strong and her family together. You work hard every day and sometimes you may even have to work two jobs in order to put food on the table, a roof over your family's head, and clothes on their backs. That's a Black woman's struggle. When you have to make sure your children are safe from danger, that's a struggle.

I must say I am proud to be a Black woman. This life is a struggle but it makes me strong. I never want anything to be given to me easily. I want to work hard and earn my own and be able to show my children that hard work does pay.

- Anton D.

Today's Black Woman

A Black woman in today's world is faced with constant strife. Women today are heads of households, raising children on their own and trying to achieve success in the world. Some try to go to school and take care of their family's needs, spend quality time with their children and be supportive of their mate or spouse.

A Black woman has to be the backbone of the family. She prays that out of all of her hard work, things will turn out okay. My mother often talks about my great-grandmother, how strong she was. Her husband left and she had to raise her three daughters alone. She worked very hard to raise and provide for them on her own. Welfare was non-existent back then. The doctors say she worked herself to death.

As a group in the classroom, we share things such as goals, current events, family issues, values, opinions, shopping tips, and we inform each other of various events in the city, be it entertainment or educational.

In conclusion, I must write this: The road to success is bumpy, but being Black and a woman adds obstacles all of its own. We are a strong group of compassionate, goal-oriented people.

- Pamela H.

We Have the Right to Go Forward

It hasn't been easy for our Black women out here. We came a long way for success. We went through a lot, through those long hard years. A lot of Black women have the right to go forward. You know there were times when we had to fight for our freedom, slave with the white man to make him satisfied.

Now Black women, our slavery days are over. We can go on with our lives, raise our children, support our community, work towards a higher education for all. We came a long way and these Black women aren't taking no stuff. We will succeed. We will build our nation. We will tackle that long road ahead. So let's go for it. I'm looking forward to the 90's.

- Lisa O.

Our Struggle

The struggle of a Black woman is very hard, because a lot of us are single parents, trying to raise our children to be respectful to others, making sure that they get the education that they need to make it in this world.

Struggling as a Black woman to get ahead could be depressing because sometimes it's hard to get daycare, so we lose out on jobs and other advantages in the world. Some of us get caught up in the streets and drug schemes and have nowhere to turn, some have even lost their children. They struggle to make the food stamps last in order to feed the children. Being on welfare is not the answer. We, as Black women, must hold our heads up high and keep the faith in our higher power.

Higher power is developing a relationship with God, asking him to walk along with you and not to place any more on you than you can handle. The higher power also places people in your life to help you along with your tribulations.

Today, we have a second chance at life. A lot of Black women are in school. We are trying to better ourselves by giving our children quality time and still maintain good grades for ourselves in school. We also take care of our homes and are productive members of society.

- Jessica

Respect

I'd like to give respect to all Black women. I read a book concerning the emancipation of women. It contained a lot of information on ways of living by our mothers, sisters, aunts, nieces, and friends.

From the beginning, we thought that women were considered inferior and incompetent by men who oppressed them. A lot of men tried to persuade women by sweet talk or by overpowering them sexually and physically. Even though some of these nonsenses were rejected by intelligent Black women, women still had to go through difficult paths.

All Black women of all over should stick together and teach each other about ways to stand against all types of abuse. To all Black Women, I love you because we are all still one big family, and you all are still the original.

- Harry E.

The Most Precious Thing

Many people, even women, seem to know not or care not about the Black woman's struggle. The Black woman has a lot of difficulties to go through in her daily life. First, she has to overcome the tradition that she's inferior to the opposite sex and the oppressors.

After that process, she has to deal with domestic trouble that comes in all kinds, such as having the kids on her tail, or being in an unequal relationship with a husband.

On top of being considered a second class citizen, the Black woman has her share of trouble because she still has to fight in the labor field. Most of the time she goes from being looked at by others as if she can't perform her duties to being harassed by chauvinist and sexist men.

Apart from all this unfairness and injustice done to the Black woman, she's still to me the most precious thing that God ever put on the land, and as long as I'm here on God's earth, I'm not going to forget about your sweetness and natural suntan.

- Harry E.

We Can Do It

A black woman's struggle is something she will never overcome. She may come close, but there will always be something she will have to jump over or walk around. But never go under, because then they will look down upon you.

We have enough struggling to do without worrying about people looking down on us. These days women are climbing the ladder of success much faster than they thought back in the sixties and seventies. Today women are construction workers, lawyers, and doctors. You name it, we can do it. We're not just nurses and mothers anymore.

Women are stronger and more determined to become something with some kind of future.

There are women who have children, but they have their careers, too. It's not just sit home and be barefoot and pregnant. That's over.

It's the nineties and women are about making their own money, not depending on black men or anybody else to bring it to them. They're getting it themselves.

- April W.

Salute to the Black Woman

When you think of beautiful, think of great Black women who have used their strong backs and backbones, minds, and constitutions to be who they were. Maybe they only had a scarf or a piece of material to cover their bodies with dignity.

The Black woman is the cradle of civilization. We created our men and offspring. Our foremothers cooked, cleaned, nursed, and raised their children and men. Oh, but they worked so hard to be a high climber, not a low stepper. I salute the Black woman.

- Dorothy H.

We Are Grandmothers, Mothers, Daughters, and Sisters

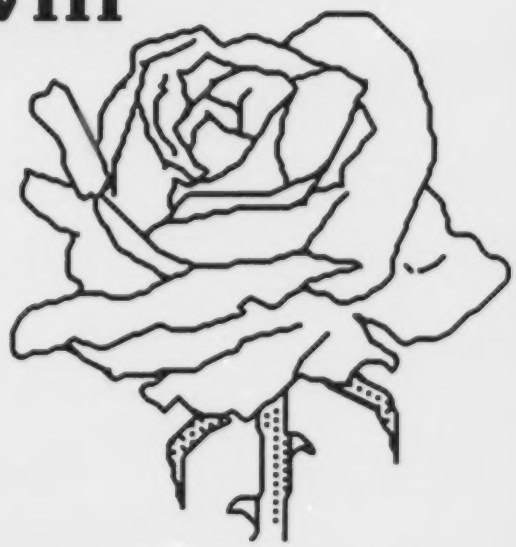
- Class Description
- Class Motto
- Grandmothers
  - My Grandchildren and School
- Mothers
  - Our Mothers
  - Our Children
  - My First Child
  - My Three Children
  - My Family
- Daughters
  - You'll See
  - Oldest Daughter
  - My Mother's Daughter
  - Jenny
- Sisters
  - My Sisters
  - My Sister and the Dog

We Are Grandmothers, Mothers, Daughters, and Sisters
Class Description

Our class asked each other what we had in common. It became clear to us as a group of women that we all had the experience of being grandmothers, mothers, daughters, and sisters. We felt that this common experience helped us during class as we shared stories and received support from each other. It was comforting to know that other women had experienced similar things in their lives.

We are a class of parents whose children or grandchildren go to school in the same building where we have our classes. It feels good to go to school with our young ones.

It doesn't matter what the problem is, women will tackle it.



My Grandchildren and School

All of my grandchildren have graduated. I am very hard on my family about education. They must give me a diploma. My grandchildren understood what I was talking about. They graduated. Some went into the service, some have good jobs. I told them that it's not what you have, but it's how you want things to be and what you want to do in life.

When my daughter turned 14, I went back to school, took a trade and got a good job in electronics. I really felt good about myself because I did something I was proud of. It also made my children think twice about education because they said that if I could go to school and get a job, so could they.

- Marilyn L

Our Mothers

I have learned to appreciate my mother very, very much. She is just one person and she had to become two people - mother and father. She has done a terrific job.

- Linda C.

When I was in trouble my mother talked to me and we became very close. My advice - talk to your kids and let them know you love them.

- Stacey G.

I'm lucky my mother is still alive. We used to fight when I was younger but now I love talking to her. She still tells me what to do and when to do it even though I'm grown. But then, don't all mothers do that to their daughters?

Bernadette D.

My mother? Well, she's just about the best friend I have when things are going bad.

Kathy L.

Our Children

My children are really great except sometimes they get on my nerves and it doesn't seem to stop. Sometimes I wish I could just run away because it feels like I can't take it anymore, but I have them and they're mine. If they didn't do anything bad, they wouldn't be children, would they?

- Kisha S.

My granddaughter just likes to be around me all day. She is a good little girl and very helpful. She loves her grandmother very much.

- Robin Anderson

My First Child

The birth of my first child was a scary experience for me only because I didn't know what labor was. I was lying on the sofa when it started. All I can say is that I kept running to the bathroom.

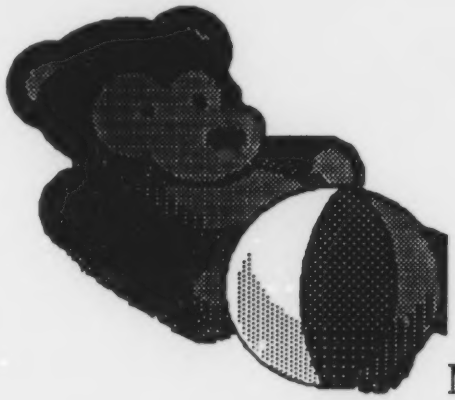
Well my baby was born in the bathroom. The rescue wagon took 45 minutes to get there. Her daddy was there, but he wasn't any help because every time I called him, he ran out the front door.

I just sat there until help came. When the rescue people got there, they cut the navel cord. They wrapped my baby up in a blanket and took her downstairs. Then they put me on a stretcher and carried me downstairs head first. I thought they were going to drop me, but I made it to the hospital.

My baby was fine and so was I. When I got her home it was easy for me because I had been watching my nieces and nephews so I knew how to handle my baby with no problems.

This is the story of the birth of my first child, Lillian Alexis Andrews, born March 20th, 1977.

Written by her mother,
- Gail A.



My Three Children

I'm a mother of three children. They are Kayo, Crystal, and Keenin. Keenin is my first child and he is now 14 years old. He likes all of the attention from everyone. He likes to play football, basketball, and watch videos. He is a very sweet person.

Kayo is my second child. He is 8 years of age. When he is away from his brother and sister, he is the quiet one. He also likes to have a lot of attention. He likes to play Nintendo and he loves Ninja Turtles. If the world was made up of Ninja Turtles, he would have a great life.

Crystal is my youngest child. She likes dolls, nail polish, and perfume. She also is very careful with her clothing.

All my children are very sweet. Here I am, the mom holding down the fort. I'm the one who has to deal with everything that comes my way. It doesn't matter what the problem is, mothers just have to tackle it. We seldom get a break from the demands of motherhood. We just go on and on, doing whatever needs to get done. Life goes on.

- Denise B.

My Family

It was hard raising eight children. My husband died when my youngest daughter was seven. That meant one person raising a family of eight. It wasn't easy but it was an experience of joy and sometimes sorrow.

My family has been with me through the good times and the bad. As each child finished school, they got a job and helped me with the next child to see that they had the things that they needed.

Some went to the service. Others went to college and some got on drugs. But the good Lord answered my prayers and they are all well except one. We are still praying for him to get his life together.

- Marilyn L.

You'll See

I remember when I lived with my mother. She was a very sweet, kind, and giving person except when she was in a mood and then it didn't matter who she was upset with. She would take it out on everyone. I couldn't wait to get out on my own.

Now I have my own house and kids to go along with it and I understand what my mother went through. She always said those words every mother tells her daughter, "You'll see!"

- Dorothy S.

Oldest Daughter

I was the oldest daughter in a family of seven. I had three brothers and three sisters. Growing up with this family was both fun and hard. The hard part came when I had to help my mother take care of my brothers and sisters. Sometimes I would stay home from school to help if someone was sick. My mother always said to everyone, "I'm so lucky to have my oldest one be a daughter."

I was never sure if I was lucky until now. Now I look back and remember all the noise and fun we had and all the closeness. By teaching me how to take care of the others, my mother taught me to be a good daughter and now, a good mother.

- Elaine J.

My Mother's Daughter

Last month, my family and I went south to our family reunion. We enjoyed going to the reunion because it gave us a chance to catch up with other relatives. I got to visit with cousins and aunts that I never see except at weddings and funerals. This year there were 130 of us at our reunion. We had a huge picnic - everyone bringing food and a dish to pass.

My mother has been dead for five years and every year she brought rhubarb pie to the picnic. This year I decided to bring pie. My mother taught me to make this pie. It's sour and sweet at the same time and it is good. Even though I've baked this pie for twenty years, I've never brought it to the picnic because I didn't think it could taste like my mother's.

"Who made this rhubarb pie?" yelled my great-aunt Coralee. I thought "Oh no, the crust is wet." When I told her I made it she looked at me and said, "Honey, I thought your mother came down from her place in heaven and made this for us. You sure are your mother's daughter."

This was my favorite family reunion yet.

Trina L.

Jenny

Last December, my daughter, was born. She was born two days before Christmas so she was my Christmas gift. I was so happy to finally have a daughter after two sons. I named her Jenny after my mom.

My sons are nice but there's something special for me to have a daughter. Jenny is so sweet and pretty. All of her aunts buy her nice dresses and I always have fun making her look nice. This might sound silly but I can't wait to fix her hair. It's not long enough yet but will be soon. We know that we dress her up as if she were a little doll but in some ways she is a little, sweet, living doll.

The boys look at Jenny and ask me when she'll be old enough to play. I know she'll have her hands full with those two brothers, but I'm glad I have a daughter.

- Annette T.

My Sisters

I remember a Christmas when I was nine years old when my sisters got everything that I wanted. One sister got her gold name earrings, a chain with her name, and more things that I wanted. My other sister got a gold name ring. I didn't get any jewelry. I got a doll with a horse that stood as tall as me and I didn't want that stupid doll! I wanted earrings and a necklace, too.

That day I cried for about ten hours. It didn't help because my doll was right in my room standing there for the entire year. I never played with her because I was at the age where I thought dolls were stupid, especially if they were as tall as me. My sisters always let me know that I was the baby.

- Tamika S.

My Sister and the Dog

When I was about 15 and my sister was ten, we were on our way to school when we decided to stop at the corner store. We were hungry and wanted junk food to eat. I got a candy bar, some hard candy, gum, and soda. She wanted a donut with powder and jelly. We were happy and on our way!

As we got closer to the school, we came across a mean dog with teeth showing and slobber running down the sides of his mouth. My sister always thought I knew what to do, being older. I was as scared as she was but I tried not to show it. He kept staring at her donut so I told her to give it to the dog or he would eat her! She gave the dog her donut, so he ate it and left us alone. I grabbed her hand and ran.

When we finally got to school we were late. I told my teacher why I was late but he didn't believe me. My sister's teacher believed her because she complained that I had made her give up her donut. Hey, what are sisters for?

- Naija S.

We Are Dreamers

- Class Description
- Class Motto
- Poem

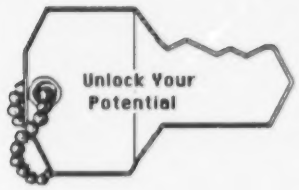
  Building on a Dream

- Group Writings

  My Dream Is...
  What You Can Do to Attain Your Dreams
  Things That Get in the Way
  Be Good to Yourself

- Individual Writings

  Hold Fast to Your Dreams
  Street Life
  Dreams
  What Got in My Way
  How I'm Getting There
  My Dreams
  A Beautiful Me



We Are Dreamers
Class Description

We have described ourselves as dreamers, dreaming of our goals. We work together to accomplish the things that we want most out of our time in class. All of us our striving towards getting our GED and meeting other personal goals.

We meet twice a week at a branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia in West Philadelphia. When the weather is cool, we have tea and coffee. There are about twelve of us, all women. Sometimes our class gets larger: friends bringing friends, sisters bringing sisters or cousins, and mothers bringing children. We live in West Philadelphia but we weren't all born here. Some of us moved here from South Philadelphia; others moved from as far away as Liberia, Trinidad, Barbados, and Jamaica.

When we work together we help each other with things that we might find hard. We laugh with each other and all of us, including our teacher, know that it's alright to make mistakes in class. We know that together we can make our dreams come true.

Strive to Accomplish Your Deepest Wish

Building on a Dream

Just a little girl -
Lost in this world;
With a dream in my heart
Hey - That's no way to start.
As hope surfaces - and aims climb
Things ascended from within the mind.
Oh, I said this I'll do
Meet with friends and share a view
To exchange the strategy.
To use the tools within our reach
and strive so hard to accomplish.
This is our deepest
wish.

•from Building on a Dream by Caroline Moore

My Dream Is ...

My dream is to take care of my children and send them to school so that they will grow up to become very good people. One day when I get old, they will make me happy.

-Musu F.

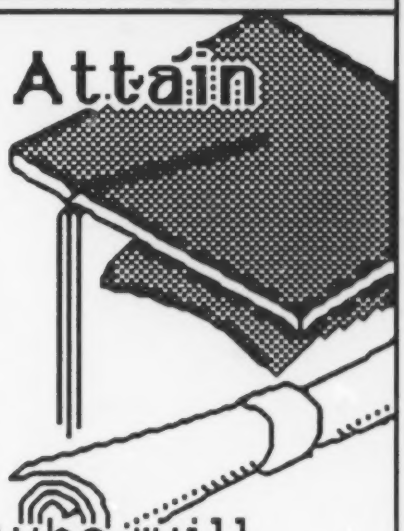
After I have accomplished my dream of becoming a corporate secretary, I would like the opportunity to share with other Black women the experience that I have had in life. We can always follow our dreams no matter what comes and goes in our lives. Never say what you cannot do!

Sheryl F.

My dreams are to have a very good job and to live in a drug-free world. To have another child, a little girl in my life, is another dream. I also want to get my GED and when my children get into a higher grade I would like to be able to help them in anything.

- Deborah D.

WhatYou Can Do to Attain Your Dreams



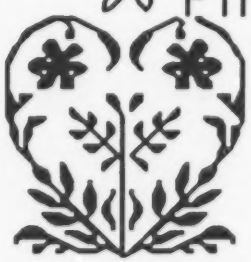
- Talk to someone who who is positive.
- Hang out with friends who will support you with your goals.
- Don't let anything get in your way.
- Direct yourself towards your dreams.
- When your alarm goes off, get up!
- Ask questions from professionals who work in the job that interests you.
- Study your heritage.
- Don't forget to...
  Feel good about yourself!

Things That Can Get In The Way of Your Dreams

- Street life, hanging out , drinking, partying.
- Not planning for the future.
- Wrong attitude, feeling inferior.
- Having children at a young age, family needs.
- No hope, letting little "things" stop you.
- No job, no money, no self-respect.
- Not caring about yourself.

Be Good to Yourself

- ☆ Take a bubble bath, listen to music, burn incense.
- ☆ Get your nails done.
- ☆ Food shopping - After buying the children what they need, buy yourself some shrimp!
- ☆ Go somewhere special with a friend.
- ☆ Go clothes shopping for bargains.
- ☆ Find some time to be alone in your house.



Hold Fast to Your Dreams

Today in class we read a poem that brought out a lot of different opinions that were our true feelings. The poem is called "Dreams" by Langston Hughes. "Hold fast to your dreams," he says. I am determined not to let my dreams dry up like raisins. My dream is to get my GED and to enter the corporate world as a secretary for a doctor or a lawyer. That is my next goal after I have received my GED.

I feel that by attending these classes, I will reach my goal and then I can say I have achieved my long term goal. Thanks to the teachers that I have met along the way and to me for not giving up.

- Sheryl F.

Street Life

At one time, street life was the only life that I knew. I didn't think I needed anything else. I didn't think about dreams or goals. I look at it now as a stage that I went through and in some ways I regret my street life of being out and partying. It stopped me from growing in life. It seemed like everything that I wanted from life came to a standstill, except for my children growing up.

I think it was good for me to experience these things because I was an inner-city child and they were part of my life and now I know what I want. Don't let street life and partying get to you like it got to me. Pick your dreams and plan ahead.

- A.A. Clement

Dreams

I deferred my dreams when I was sixteen when I had my first child. I had to stop going to school and stay at home. When I turned twenty I said to myself, "Sharon, you have a dream. Don't you think you should go get started?" Then I started doing something. I went to school to get my GED but I didn't finish. Then I went to a trade school and didn't finish that. I asked myself, "When is this going to stop?" I had my second child then. I just stopped trying for three years.

My children are getting older and I will have to help them when they need it so I know I need to go back to school. What I expect out of this class is to learn again so that I can help myself and my children and see my dreams come true.

Sharon S.

What Got in My Way

I started hanging in the street with my friends, getting into drugs and partying - the last thing I wanted to do was go to school. That wasn't how I saw my life going, and I thought I knew what I was doing. Drugs and partying got in the way of my dreams. Taking care of myself, having children, and learning were not high on my list of things to do with my life. Then I started doing things to feel good about myself.

As I started growing and changing my life, I started to dream of getting things done for myself and my children. Two of my dreams are coming true - taking care of myself and going back to school.

- Sharon S.

How I'm Getting There

At one time I thought that I didn't know what I wanted. But now I do. In March, I went to the CFL program to start fulfilling my dream of getting my GED.

I found the first class that I went to was too fast for me, so I said I must go on and do what I can do. I asked my coordinator to help me get a tutor. The next week she called me and told me that she had found a tutor for me to work with one-on-one.

It started from there. I've been with my tutor for four months and I feel like I'm getting somewhere. I'm also going to class twice a week and know that my dreams are happening because I'm working hard at them.

- Karen L.

My Dreams

I am ready to join the workforce now and what has always interested me is law enforcement. Soon I'll be ready to take my written test for city correctional officer. My goals are to earn my GED and educate myself more so that I and my children will have the things that we need such as clothing, a home, and savings in the bank. We will be able to have these things because of my earnings.

For 18 years, I've been on welfare and now I realize that it has made me lazy and dependent on others. It is time for me to graduate from this system and seek these dreams. My self-esteem is at an all time high. I really feel good about myself!

- A. A. C.

Fulfilling My Dream
A Beautiful Me

I was in search of something in my life. I decided that this was the time I needed to look at the positive side of life and to forget the past. I started talking to people about ideas for what to do. Some of them had negative remarks, others had encouraging words, words to build on. These I kept as tools, and instruments of gold. With these tools I built courage, courage which bloomed into action, and this action pushed me off to a start.

I enrolled in a nursing assistant class which lasted for six months. I made it to the end without missing one day of attendance. When I graduated, I felt like I had removed a blockage from within. Eager to fulfill my dreams, I decided to continue my education - to bring out of my life a beautiful me.

- Caroline M.

We Are Math Learners

- Class Description
- Class Motto
- About Math
- Working Alone

  Ten Things That Help
  Math Homework

- Working Together

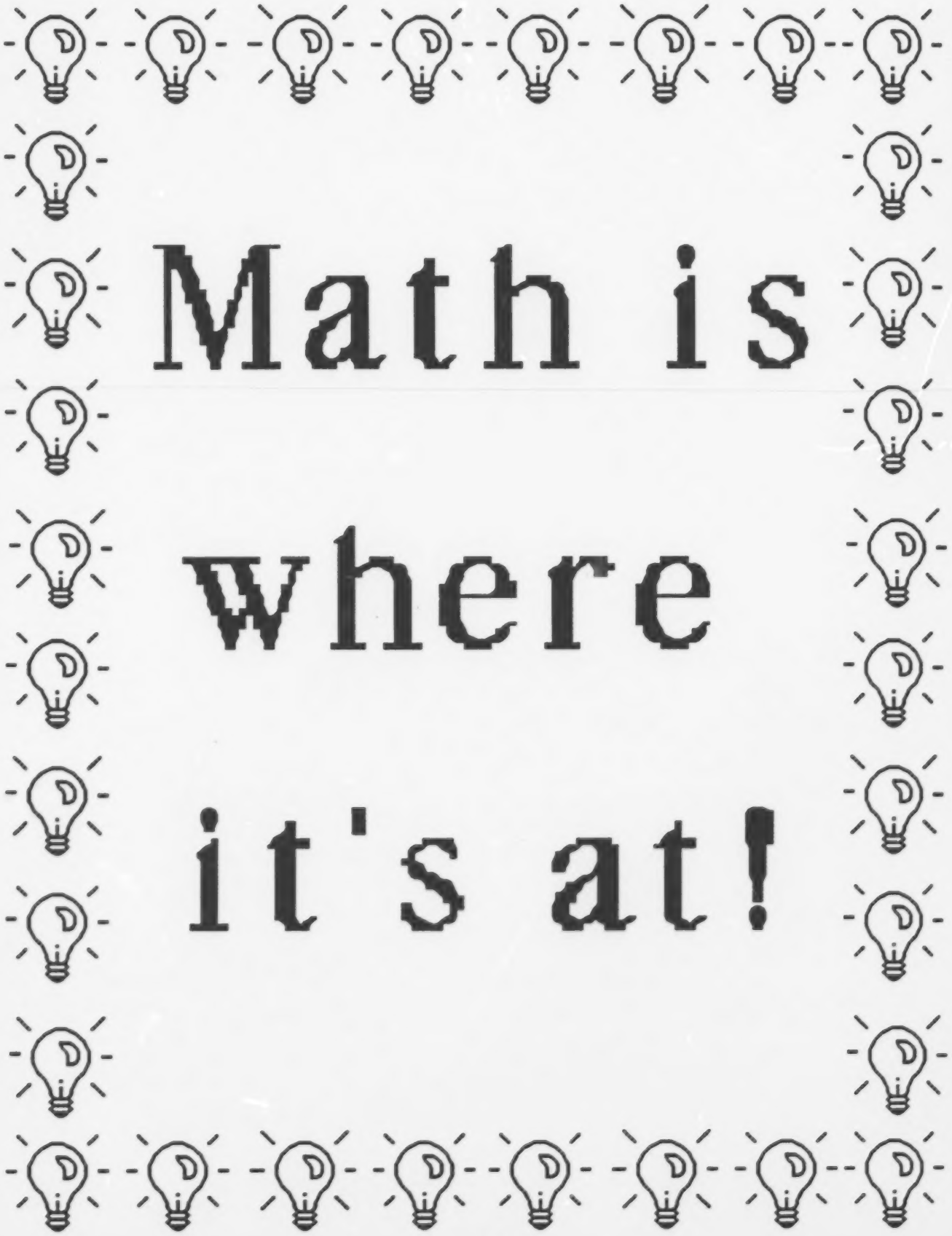
  Things That Make Math Interesting
  What We Don't Like
  Math Games

We Are Math Learners
Class Description

When we started working on math some of us knew algebra and some of us knew addition and subtraction. We were on many different levels and needed different types of help. Some of us just needed assurance that we were on the right track. We also needed lessons on fractions and decimals.

We also talked about math, what it's like for us to learn math and how we learn it. Together we found out that we could learn math with each other's help. We decided to use the first hour of each class for math and found that, with such a limited amount of time, we needed to work together as a group. Our teacher decided to get "amnesia." When we asked him a question, he would tell us to ask "so and so because they know how to do that type of problem."

One week our teacher brought in marshmallows, raisins, bread, and flour. He used the marshmallows to show us what real fractions looked like. By cutting a marshmallow in half and then sticking it back together, we were able to see how two halves make a whole. Instead of just looking at 1/4 or 1/8 on paper, he showed it to us by using food - something we were all interested in. He showed us how to do whole number division and multiplication using raisins. By using 42 raisins and seeing how many piles of raisins we got if we had piles of 7 raisins each, the idea of division became clearer. He also asked us to think about making up a lesson about math. The next day we came with gallon jugs to talk about measurements, and cookies and pizza to talk about fractions.


Math is
where
it's at!

About Math

I like class because if you make a mistake, you can laugh about it. Everyone laughs with you, not at you.

- Chris J.

The challenge makes it fun. Not to quit when you get mad at all these numbers hitting you at once. But to stop and take a deep breath and do it. I'm going to figure it out no matter what.

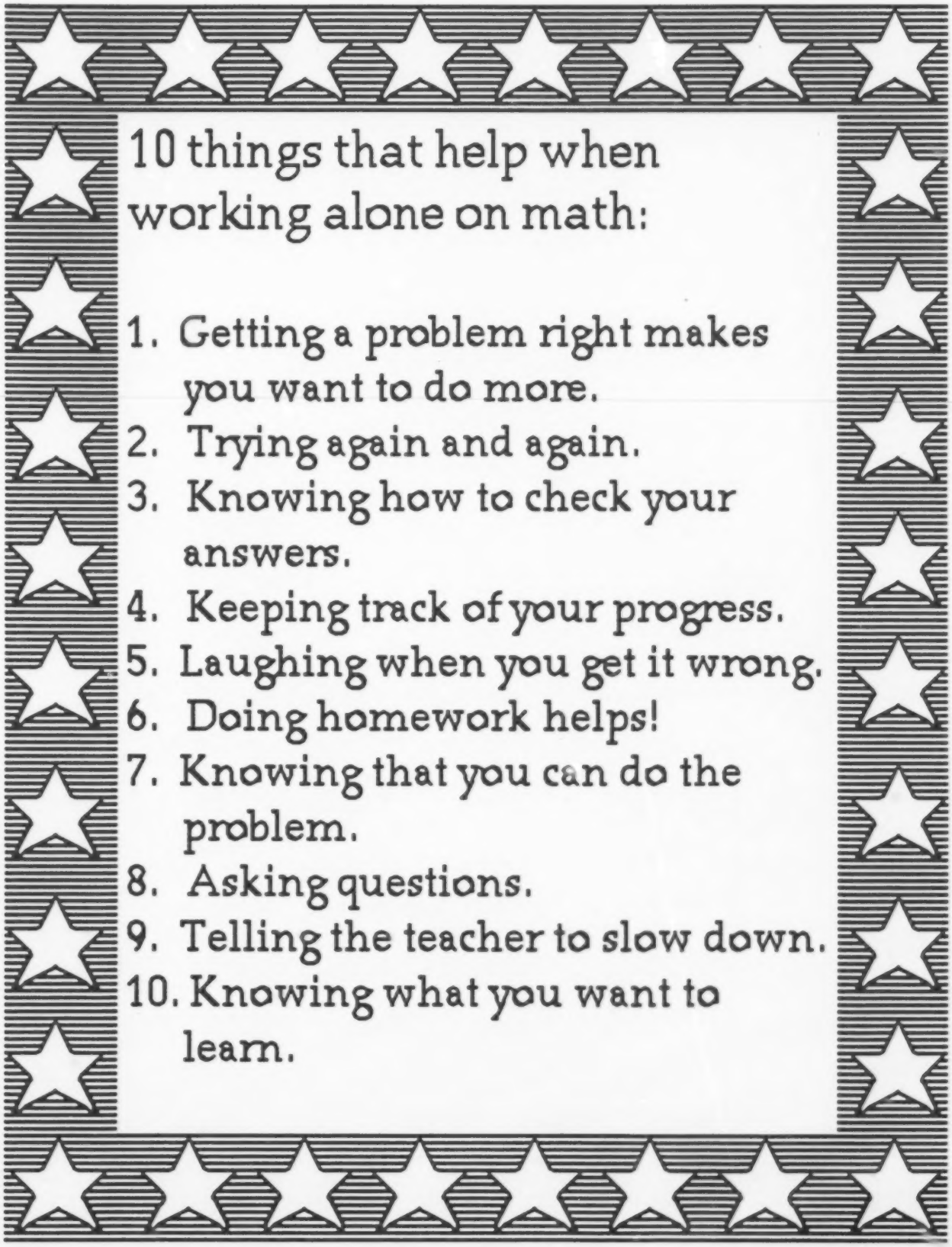
- Chris T.

I never thought math was much fun until I started to understand it. Now learning from each other makes it easier and fun. I'm not scared of it anymore.

- Mary

What's good about this class is that we are learning a little about every kind of math problem. We used a blueberry pie to learn fractions. That worked really well. Now when I look at dessert, I wonder how many pieces a whole thing can be cut into.

- Kathy



10 things that help when working alone on math:

1. Getting a problem right makes you want to do more.
2. Trying again and again.
3. Knowing how to check your answers.
4. Keeping track of your progress.
5. Laughing when you get it wrong.
6. Doing homework helps!
7. Knowing that you can do the problem.
8. Asking questions.
9. Telling the teacher to slow down.
10. Knowing what you want to learn.

Math Homework

What do you think about doing math homework? One class had a round-table discussion about their math homework. This is what they said:

Chris T — I usually do my homework around 5:00 A.M. on nights that I work. It's so quiet then - I can think.

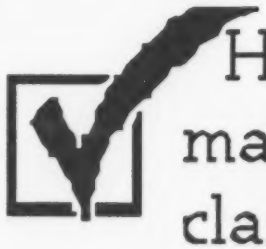
Mary — Well, after I leave class on Tuesday, I don't do anything - just think about the class. I start my homework on Wednesday night so that I have a chance to think about it before our Thursday evening class.

Chris J. — Mary and I work together at each other's house and between the two of us we get a lot accomplished.

Kathy — It helps to work with somebody else, but I like the quiet, too. When I go to the unemployment office, I stop in the park and do my homework there.

John: — I need total silence. I lay out in the sun. It's got to be quiet or else I can't concentrate.

Chris J. — My brother jokes when he sees me doing my math homework, but I tell him that I'm exercising my mind. I don't want my mind to get flabby like my body!



Here is a list of things that make math interesting for our class when we work together:

- Listening to each other.
- Explaining problems.
- Putting the problems on the board.
- Exchanging answers as a group - everyone getting a chance to answer.
- Correcting each other's work.
- Taking turns leading the class.
- Doing short drill work to test our progress.
- Creating and doing math games.
- Helping each other.

$37 \times 16 + 2 = ?$ $\$18.32 - \$2.59 = ?$

$42 + 6(3 \times 4) = ?$

Here are some of the things that we don't like about learning math:

- Common denominators.
- Someone shouting out the answer.
- Forgetting steps of a problem.
- Reading word problems.
- Rushing through the answers.
- Changing decimals to fractions.
- Getting the answer wrong when we know how to do the problem.
- Not being able to figure out the problem by ourselves.

32% x 125 =?

2/7 x 4/5 =?

72,489 x 327,976 = ?

Math Games

Math games can be a fun and challenging way of learning math. One class had two favorite games and also created their own. These games are played by teams. The class is divided into teams and each team picks a name for itself. Someone needs to volunteer to be the scorekeeper.

The Bagel Game: This game is played at the blackboard. The board is divided in half. Each half has a bagel shape drawn into the middle of it. The bagel is then divided into eight sections with spokes going outside of the bagel. One number is placed in the center of the bagel. Other numbers are in the sections. The number in the center is then used as the multiplier, divisor, or the number to be added or subtracted to the various numbers in the spokes of the bagel. The answers are placed in the space created by the spokes going outside of the bagel.

One member from each team goes to the blackboard. They challenge their math skills by either multiplying, dividing, adding, or subtracting the bagel numbers.

Object: The team member who completes the bagel first receives one point for his or her team. The opposing team checks the first team's answers. If there are any incorrect answers, the point goes to the opposing team.

Tough Flash Cards: The class and instructor make up flash cards using problems from class work. A key number is omitted and the class has to guess the number. Example A: $17 \times ? = 153$ Example B: $? + 147 - ? = 159$

The class divides into teams. The instructor or scorekeeper randomly holds up a card. As each problem is solved, the team who solves it shouts, "Solved!" and gives the answer. If the answer is incorrect, the opposing team has a chance to answer it and win the point. If both teams get the problem wrong, then it is put on the board and the problem is worked out by team members.

Object: The team with the most points at the end of the game wins. A time limit should be set on each round.

The Problem Game: This game was created by the Northeast CFL community class. It took a lot of cooperation and laughs to develop a game which was fair to both teams. Learners create their own problems. Problems are created for the opposite team. Some guidelines need to be agreed upon before the beginning of the game, such as limiting the number of digits in each problem or the math function for the level of the teams.

Example: Both teams will agree to use numbers with place values no greater than to the hundredths place and only in addition or subtraction. This prevents one team who is better in decimals from having an unfair advantage

How to Play:

1. The class divides into teams and picks a team name. Each team member writes one problem on a piece of paper and folds the paper to hide the problem.

2. The scorekeeper collects the problems, keeping each team from seeing the other team's problems. The scorekeeper then uses Team A's problems for Team B and Team B's problems for Team A.

3. The blackboard is divided in half. As each team member goes to the board in rounds, the scorekeeper gives each one a problem. They put the problem on the board and compute the problem.

4. The first team member who has the problem correct without help from the rest of the team wins the point for the round.

5. The team with the most points at the end of the rounds wins.

We Are Learning English

- Class Description
- Class Motto
- Who We Are

  Just People
  English Is Not My First Language
  What We Would Like Others to Know
  Our Customs at Christmas
  Dances from the Philippines

- Our Class

  English Class
  Our Class
  How We Make People Welcome

We Are Learning English
Class Description

We are a class that speaks English as our second language. Spanish is our first language and we are from Puerto Rico, Columbia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, and Honduras. We work hard because this is an intermediate English class and we want to become advanced in our speaking, reading, and writing of English.

We love telling stories about ourselves and others from our countries and about our friends and families. We tell our stories in English. Our teacher suggested this so that we can improve our English with each other. Here, we know that we will not be made to feel embarrassed about our English and we can try to say different things or repeat something that we heard but didn't understand.

We always have a break during the class so that we can ask our teacher questions and relax for a few minutes. During the break, we have coffee or snacks. One man brings snacks such as cookies and malta which is a beverage from Puerto Rico. This gentleman was a musician. He is always in class and is also involved as a speaker in a drug rehabilitation program. He is learning better English so that he can get a better job.

All of our class is warm, affectionate, and caring towards each other and our teacher.

If we want, we can!

Who We Are

- Everybody in this class has a dream. What we want is to learn English and finish school.
- We learn and study because we all want to progress. This refreshes the mind that learned it in years past.
- We work hard but it's worth it.
- We want to tell everyone that learning is the key to success tomorrow.
- We don't put anyone down if they don't understand the work we are given to do.
- Our class means a lot to us. It is part of our lives.
- This class is made of cooperative people. We are very happy here. We are learning English, math, diction, writing, and conversation.

Just People

What makes this class special is the people with different backgrounds. Everybody has his or her own story to tell. We learn, listen, and communicate with one another. I believe that if anyone had a really serious problem, he or she would talk about it. That's what makes us special, getting to know one another. Every week it is something new. There are no big "I's" or little "you's" - just people!

- Lyn M.

There are no big "I's" or little "you's"
- just people!

English Is Not My First Language

Since I wasn't born in America, my second language, English, is difficult for me. I was born in the Philippines and Tagalog is my first language. I find it hard to express myself in English because I don't speak the language very often. I am learning English in school and through watching T.V., reading newspapers, books, and magazines. Also, I go to an English speaking mass every Sunday. I am a Catholic.

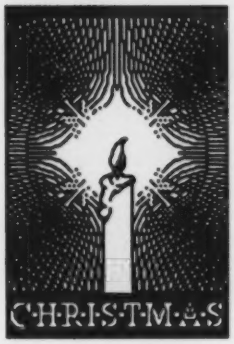
Often I don't talk to people so that they cannot assume anything about me. If I don't speak to them they don't know that I can't speak English well. I don't mind their business, I mind my business first.

Different cultures have different ways of life. Being a foreigner, my culture is a lot different. As an example, we don't live with a man until we are married to him. It would be against our family and church to do that.

- Lourdes M.

What We Would Like Others to Know about Us

- I would like to share with others our music and our love of music. Music makes life easier and our music is happy.
- People should know that we are conservative in our beliefs and many of us are religious.
- I would like to have everyone share our enthusiasm of celebrating the Christmas Party and eat our delicious food. We celebrate Christmas for many days, not just one day.
- We are relaxed. We are trusting of people. Instead of always thinking like a city person, we think more like a countryside person.
- We have respect for our family like our grandfather and uncles. We have a lot of family unity.



Our Customs At Christmas

I would like to share something special about our Christmas holiday. I am from Puerto Rico and we celebrate Christmas from December 24th to January 8th. It is on that day that the Magi brought gifts to Christ.

In Puerto Rico, people cook outside in the yards and play music. We go from house to house celebrating Christmas with lots of wonderful food and drinks, and fun. We call the time between Christmas and New Year's Day the Parrandas. We celebrate the Christmas season until January 8 and this is called Octavitas.

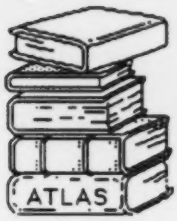
- Julio S.

Dances from the Philippines

I am from the Philippines and I would like to share a dance we call Tinikling. This is fun for a large group of people. You need two long pieces of bamboo and two people to hold the bamboo sticks. This is like a line dance and two people at a time go between the pieces of bamboo and dance in front of everyone else.

Another dance is called Pandango. This is a slow dance and the dancers have a light such as a candle in the palms of their hands. This is a beautiful dance to see.

- Lourdes M.



English Class

Coming to English class I learned to make a shopping list. Also I am speaking to people better than before. Recently I filled out an application form on my own. The best thing that has happened to me is that I'm learning how to write.

-Julio S.

Now I write and read English. At home I can read newspapers and magazines. Little by little now I know how to write and read English, but I want to learn more until I know the meaning of all the words.

-Lourdes M.

I always learn something new in English class. All of us try hard because we want to learn English. Sometimes I have to write in Spanish because I don't know the English words, but everyone helps me.

-Evelyn P.

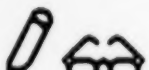
Our Class

We are on our way.
We are learning English together.
We have dreams of having a good future.
We help each other.
We know that learning is our key to success.
We have a class that is happy!

HOW WE MAKE PEOPLE FEEL WELCOME IN OUR CLASS

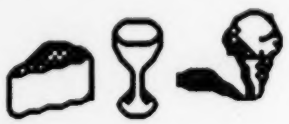
First we make coffee.

We have our regular seats.

We share materials. 

We have a 15 minute break.

We talk about our families.

We share food. 

We make jokes with our classmates.

We Are Computer Users

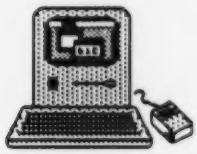
- Class Description
- Class Motto
- Our Computer Journals
- Our Thoughts about Computers

  Comments about Using the Computer
  How Do We Feel about Computers?
  How Has Using a Computer Helped Us?

- Computer Know How

  Advice to Computer Users
  Checklist - Home Computer Users
  Vocabulary for Computer Users

- Parting Thoughts



We Are Computer Users
Class Description

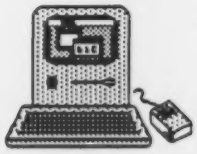
Our class was selected for a special computer project because of our regular attendance, our participation in other CFL projects, and the fact that we had demonstrated responsibility in other areas.

The project was named the Power Learning Project. It provided each class member with the opportunity to use a computer and a modem hook-up in his or her own home.

The class members familiarized themselves with the computer and its parts by using word processing software called Claris Works. This allowed the class members to become comfortable with using the computers and aided them in their individual writing instruction. The class members kept computer journals, excerpts of which are included in this packet. They wrote often in and out of class about their experiences with the computer - what was hard and what was easy about the experience.

Next the learners were shown how to use the modem to interact with the educational software available. Each learner was able to work at home at his or her leisure on different lessons.

Learn all
you can
from the
computer
– it's the future.



Excerpts from Our Computer Journals

Part I - The Beginning

I am learning the different ways of using the computer. For one, how to take the disks out of the computer and how to use the word processor.

- Mattie B.

I am proud to receive a computer in my home. It will make me have more ambition.

- Lois F.

I love to work with the computer, but I don't have too much time. I still have to have someone to assist me.

- Lorenzo P.

When I work on the computer, I can open up. What I don't know is how to go all the way through. When it says "click" and I do "butterfly" "s" and I still can't make it move, I stop and start, stop and start, over and over again.

- Mattie B.

I'm having a hard time with my computer. I get frustrated at times. One of my problems is getting hooked up to the phone.

- Pamela C.

I am getting better on the computer. But I had a little problem over the weekend hooking the phone up. It was very frustrating. I went over it three times, but when I went to class I found out my problem.

- Chester B.

Part II - Working on the Computers

I'm enjoying working with my computer. I run into some problems, but I am working it out on my own. As I go on the computer system it gets a little easier for me.

One of the disks was easy to learn, and it was the Macintosh Tour* disk, because it gets you the information to follow and is easy to work with. I am still working on the other disk to learn how to work with it. I have a lot of fun working on the computer, but I can't concentrate when I am interrupted with a lot of noise.

- Linda F.

It is very interesting to work with computers. It is very interesting what you can do working with computers.

- Lorenzo P.

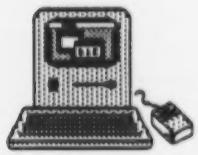
The computer is fun; it is a great way to learn. It helps me to think. I learn new words. Word processing is easy for me to get into, but Cybis** is much harder. Once you follow the instructions and understand it well enough to get into different subjects, I feel I can be more successful in the lessons.

I learned a lot about periods and commas. Even learning the meaning of "word processing" is new to me. I didn't know what it meant before I started working on the computer. So to be able to understand and operate the computer means a lot to me.

- Carrie N.

* Macintosh Tour is a step by step description of how to use the Macintosh computer.
** Cybis is an on-line, integrated learning system utilized by the authors of this packet.

Part III - Now We Are Computer Users



I'm working on the computer more and more now. My first disks were very easy to follow. I worked all the way through the Claris Works* disk with no problems. I learned how to hold my hands on the keyboard properly, and learned what fingers to use on which keys.

The problem came in with the telephone hook-up. I know how to work with Cybis, but I have no room near the outlet where my telephone is. The other place is in my children's room. Some students have problems within the home about the hours we have to spend on the telephone with the program. I am very interested in learning about the computer.

- Linda F.

When I got the hang of using the computer, it was easy and a lot of fun. The computer is very helpful to all of us. There are so many ways you can use the computer. I learned the different ways of using the keys when it comes to the phones. All phones are not the same.

The keys on the computer are fun to learn. "Next" is the same as "return." The command key you use sometimes with the shift key, and this is for "stop." When I had problems, I called John and he helped me a lot. Now I understand more about

* Claris Works is a word processing software package.

the computer, but I still have a lot more to learn. I like working with the computer because it is interesting.

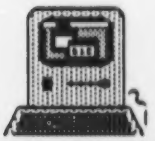
- Mary J.

We love the computer. We, meaning my children and classmates. Having the computer in my home is good for my children.

- Pamela C.

I love my computer; it is a good thing to have in the house. I love working on it. I learned new words, such as "shift" key, "return," the "mouse," the "cursor," and "word processing." It's like going to a new town, or new places. You get lost but you find your way. I have learned more each time I worked on it. I understand that it's a lot to learn, so I want to learn all I can. When I'm working on it, I forget about anything else.

- Carrie N.



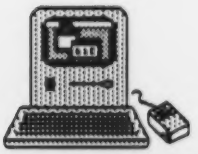
Comments about Using the Computer

Advantages of word processing:

- I've been recognizing commas, periods, and quotation marks and remembering to use them more since I started using the computer.
- It helps me think more.
- It improves my reading and spelling.
- It relaxes my mind.
- It helps me to get into it and feel good.
- I get up in the morning and have something to do.

Problems of on-line work:

- Not being able to get back into where you were.
- It takes a lot of practice if you've never done it before.
- I get frustrated and have to slow down.
- I have to take my time to get through the assignment.



How Do We Feel about Computers?

- Computers are a good resource for learning many things.
- They help you think.
- I like them.
- They help me with word processing skills.
- Children like them because they help with doing schoolwork.
- They work, they help, and they are nerve wracking!
- I see the computer as a very good learning tool. They help teach math and English skills.
- They help to stimulate the mind.
- Computers can fit into my life in different ways, for example: work, home, personal use, and budgeting my finances.
- I like to play different games on the computer!

How Has Using a Computer Helped Us?

- They're helpful in storing and processing information.
- I was able to pass a typing test that I needed to pass.
- The computer helps me with what I need to know for my job in the future.
- A computer helps me pay bills and organize myself. Next I want to have a fax machine!
- I use one at home to help teach my children and to store personal information.
- It's like a typewriter, but it's designed to cut down on your paperwork.

Advice to Computer Users

- Use the Macintosh Tour to learn how to use the computer.
- Learn all the symbols that correspond to the commands.
- Get used to moving the the arrow around the screen.
- Learn what's in all the files.
- Have ready whatever it is that you are going to work on.
- Read the directions carefully before you start.
- When the mouse won't do what you want it to do, pick it up, put it down, and start again.
- Don't eat or drink around the computer. Don't let children who are too young fool with it.
- Put the computer in a safe place - not too hot or too cold.
- Cover the computer except when in use.

Checklist - Home Computer Users

_____1. Do you know how to get into the program you want?

_____2. Do you know how to save on the right disk?

_____3. Can you find a proper place with enough room for your computer and the things that go with it?

_____4. Do you have a place where you won't be interrupted?

_____5. Can you work with someone else? People are less likely to be frustrated if two or three people are working together.

_____6. Will you have patience when the screen freezes up?

If you have a modem:

_____7a. Are you going to be tying up the phone lines too much? It's not a good idea to use a modem if a lot of people use the phone in your house.

_____7b. Can you find a place near the phone outlet or do you have a long enough cord from the jack to the computer?

Vocabulary For Computer Users

Backspace Key: In word processing, this key erases.

Command Key: A key that changes the meaning of other keys.

Cursor: Sometimes it's a line on the screen that shows you where your writing will appear on the screen. Sometimes it's an arrow that you can move on the screen to make the computer do things. Sometimes it's a hand that you can point at the answer you want.

Disk: A flat, square plastic object with a thin plastic disk inside it. It has programs on it for lessons. Also, you can use it to start up your computer, and you can store your own writing on it.

Drag: To hold the mouse down and move the cursor or select a word, sentence, or entire page.

Hardware: The equipment which is any part that you can touch and handle. This includes the screen or monitor, the keyboard, and the hard-drive.

Keyboard: It's like a typewriter. It has letters, numbers, and other command keys.

Memory: What stays in the computer either on a hard drive or on your disk.

Modem: A box that connects computers through telephone lines.

Mouse: A little square box with a button on top, and a roller underneath to move it. It is connected to the computer with a wire. In word processing, it lets you use directions at the top of the screen, to open or close a file, for instance. It puts the cursor where you want it.

On-line: A computer is on-line when it connects with another computer by telephone using a modem.

Printer: A machine for printing what you have entered into the computer.

Program: Something you put into in the computer, a set of commands to tell the computer to do something.

Quit: To close down the computer so that you may turn it off.

Return Key: It tells the computer to do something. In word processing, it starts a new line.

Save: To save your word-processed writing either on a hard drive or a disk for future use.

Shift Key: It changes lower case letters to capital letters and does other commands.

Software: These are the programs which make the computer do what it does. You can't touch it.

Telephone Hook-up: It lets you have computers connected by telephone with a modem.

Word Processing: Putting your own words into the computer as you would if you were using a typewriter.

Parting Thoughts about the Computer

- Who would have thought two years ago that I would be working with a computer. I know that I didn't. The name of the game is to stay in school and progress.
- Now that I have used one, I wonder what would I do without it?
- I would feel lost without it now that it has become an important part of my life.
- This is the modern age of technology and computers rule everybody - aristocrats, bureaucrats, white and blue collar workers, and welfare recipients.
- The computer is a big part of the system today. The jobs are using more and more computers and schools are, too. I am an student in an adult literacy education program. I will use the computer for me and my children. I'm using it basically for learning how to read, spell, and do math.

We Are Workers

- Class Description
- Class Motto
- Our Job

  Passing on Tips of the Trade
  Workers Need to Know
  Residential Advisors Need to Know

- In Class

  What We Have Learned
  Who Are We?

- Advice

  I Didn't Want to Be Here
  Learning the Second Time
  Advice from Our Class

I have confidence
that I can do
anything.
However, if I can't,
that's okay, too.

We Are Workers
Class Description

Our class at Resources for Human Development (RHD) was formed to meet a specific goal: to improve the writing of reports at work. RHD is a non-profit organization that has numerous sites throughout Philadelphia. The sites include residential facilities for homeless people, facilities for former drug or alcohol abusers, and facilities for mentally ill individuals. The members of this work place documentation class are the professional caretakers and residential advisors at the various RHD sites.

During the course, we explored issues that relate to working with RHD clients. These issues include mental health, homelessness, drugs and alcohol, the stigma of mental illness, and stress. By reading articles, sharing work experiences, and brainstorming for ideas and solutions, we learn more about working in the mental health field at RHD.

We often role-play incidents that could occur at an RHD site, and then write an incident report based on the role-play. Sometimes we watch movie clips to write incident reports.

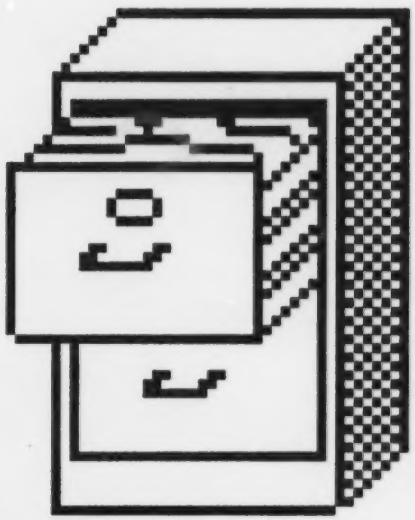
Through group activities such a role-plays, discussions, and peer editing of writing, class members formed strong bonds with each other. Individuals felt comfortable asking questions and sharing ideas because they knew that there was a high level of trust and respect within the group.

Passing on the Tips of the Trade

Our class is made up of experienced employees who have a lot of knowledge. When we put together everything we know, we could write a book about how to work with clients and how to be a good employee at any job. In our class, we have learned even more about ourselves, about writing, and about work.

We are passing on our ideas to you!

Workers need to know how to:



- Spell well.
- Be well-organized.
- Be team players.
- Communicate with supervisors and co-workers.
- Write using complete sentences.
- Ask questions.
- File documents.
- Answer phones correctly.

As Residential Advisors We Need To Know How To:

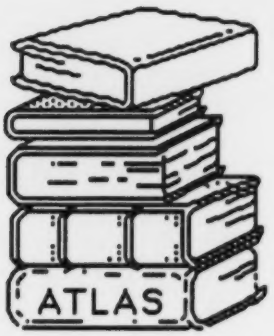
- Write reports without using judgements.
- Write in daily logs.
- Write complete case studies well.
- Spell "cigarette."
- Recognize and handle a crises.
- Restrain clients.
- Help clients adjust to the community.
- Know when to hold hands or hug.
- Be strong and say "yes" or "no" when appropriate.

In our workforce documentation class, we learned how to:

- Be punctual.
- Have open discussions.
- Defend equality.
- Write accurate notes.
- Use quotation marks.
- Respect clients.
- Understand others' points of view.
- Help others.
- Use "ed" at the end of a word.
- Share learning from this class with other staff.

Who Are We?

The class at RHD had many answers to the question of, "Who are we?" They drew pictures to help them explain who they are as individuals and as a class. Class members described their pictures, and each description started a discussion in the class about feelings and class memories.

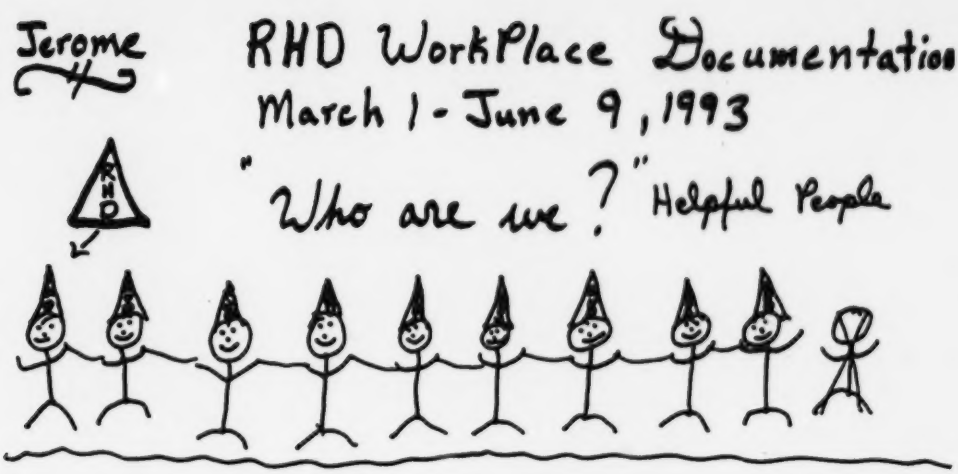


Andrea:

Here is my picture. Ellen always keeps a smile. She is Smiley. This is Reginald. He is a Joker. There is Wede, who is Intelligent. Jerome is the Nice Guy, and Dominick is Never Here. Jeff is the Professor, and here's me. I'm Just Here--a lot of mornings I don't want to be here at 8:30 A.M. Dennis is Slick, and Amy is the Bookworm.

Class Response:

This is a good picture. Ellen is aware of the whole class. She also figured out who has problems coming to work.



United we stand Divided we fall

Jerome:

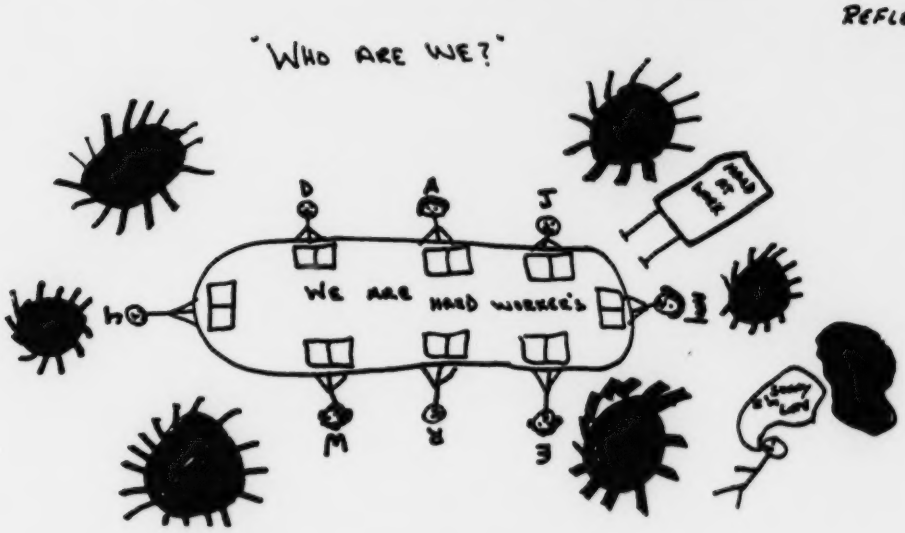
This is our class. We are all helpful people, United we stand, divided we fall.

Class Response:

I agree with Jerome's idea. We're really all helpful people. Working at RHD, all the employees are on one level.

RHD WORKPLACE DOCUMENTATION CLASS REGINALD WASHINGTON
MAR. 1, – JUNE 9, 1993

REFLECTION #1



Reginald (Reggie):

All of us are around the table. It's like sunshine. We all glow. We help each other. Dominick is on the right side of the picture, coming in late. He is like a cloud. Even when he's here, he doesn't help. But we're hard at work, books in front of us.

Class Response:

We know how you feel, Reggie. Sometimes we come in feeling down. The sunshine feeling brings us up. This morning some of us felt bad, but now we feel great.

MHD WORKPLACE DOCUMENTATION CLASS Mar.-June 93

"Who Are We?"

Ellen:

It's not just an ordinary class. We all come from the same job, and we all care about our clients. The sunshine represents all of us. The flower represents our clients blossoming. This is us, after taking this class. We are coming out from behind clouds.

Class Response:

I like the way the picture looks. This class played a major role in helping me in another class and on my job. I would yell at people. I deal with clients better. The environment in the class has spread to the job.

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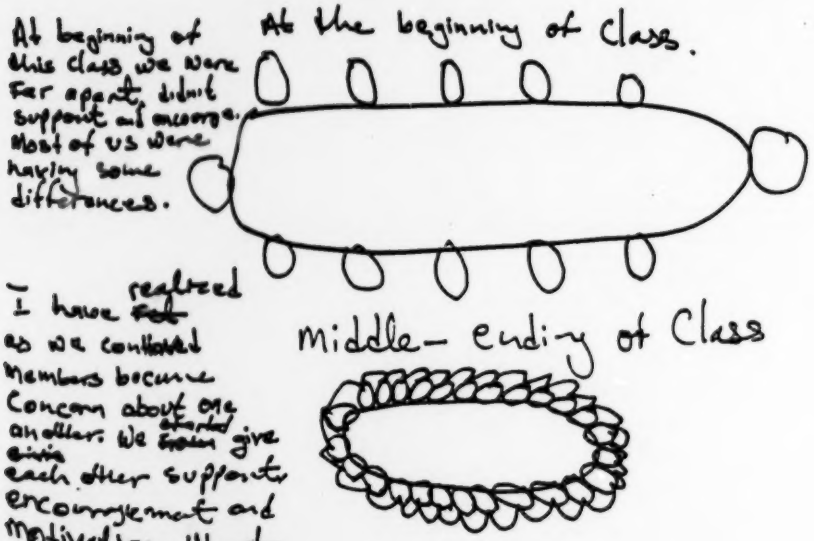
Wade Bryant RHD Workplace Documentation Class
March 1 - June 9, 1993

"Who Are We?"

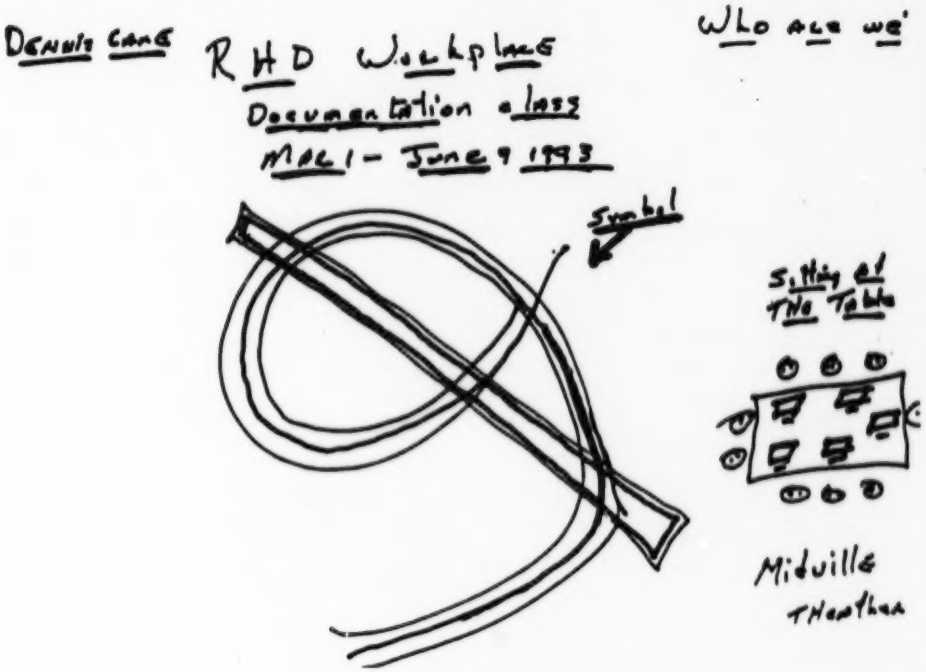

At beginning of this class we were far apart, didn't support and encourage. Most of us were having some differences.
At the beginning of class.
I have realized as we continued members became concern about one another. We started give each other support encouragement and motivation that brought us very close together. We share one common problem Spelling. Which united us
middle- ending of Class

Wede:

Here is a picture of our class at the beginning of the year, and then a picture of us from the middle to the end of the year. In the beginning we were sitting far apart--we had differences. After we realized that we all had similar goals, each member got concerned about each other. One common problem is spelling. It made us feel comfortable with each other in class. We felt comfortable with self-disclosure.

Class Response:

As a class, we made progress. Dictionaries vanished. We asked each other for help with words.



Dennis:

The stained glass window is a symbol of the class. We're all together. Once we get inside, we're all one. We're all here for one purpose--to improve ourselves. For example, we learned the difference between "are" and "our" in sentences. Amy showed us how to do it. I never used a period before in my sentences.

Class Response:

We agree. At first we took the recruitment as an insult, but now we know the class was good for us.

Jeff:

The tree represents Amy, and us learning and going on, floating to where we're going. The pictures can't translate what I feel--it's just scratching the surface.

Class Response:

I agree. It'll be rough not having class now.

I'll never forget about the people I met here--thank you.

Amy (teacher):

How can I begin to say how I feel? This class is extremely close--more so than all the other classes. It doesn't usually happen tot his extent. I see teamwork, like basketball games on sunny days.

I Didn't Want to Be Here

When I began this class I found out that there were some words and things that I thought I knew, but I was wrong. For an example, with words that were in the past tense, I never used "ed" at the end. The difference between "their" and "there"--they sound the same but have different meanings. At the beginning, it was hard for me to come to the class because I did not want to be here. But I found that it was very helpful to me.

- Jerome A.

Learning the Second Time

What I've learned did not come from a book, but from the people in my class. None of us is alone. We all share common problems, cares, and concerns. Although we all come from different walks of life, we are all valuable people and should stand up for ourselves and others.

I have confidence that I can do anything. However, if I can't, that's okay, too.

The things I have learned from this class I had learned before and had forgotten. As an adult, I feel that I won't forget the things I learned the second time around. Learning is a constant in our lives. When we are taught one thing, we learn so much more.

- RHD Class Member

Advice from Our Class

If I could pass on something from this class, I would say that you need to open your mind and your heart to what you hear and see, and never stop trying to learn and know that listening is a part of learning.

- Jeffry K.

Taking this course doesn't mean that you are dumb. Instead it helps you in the area that you need the most help, like punctuation, grammar, reading, etc. It can take you a long way in life.

- Andrea D.

I would like to pass on to another worker that it is alright not to know everything. I would also like to say that the magic word in the world today is "help."

- Reginald W.

Conclusion

Our adult learners have a wealth of customs, experience, knowledge, and traditions, i.e., they have a culture, which is worth documenting. Several things happen as a result of engaging learners in the process of exploring and documenting their culture:

- Learners develop a better sense of their own culture;
- The customs, experience, knowledge, and traditions of the learners are validated;
- Learners develop a better sense of others' cultures;
- Learner-authors have a real audience for writing;
- Materials are available to other learners on an appropriate reading and interest level;
- The writing process is demystified especially for the authors but also for other learners using the packets;
- The learning process is seen as relevant to learners' everyday lives and experiences;
- The concept of learning as making meaning is understood as learners identify, explore, and document something as meaningful to them as their own culture.

We believe that adult learners using these materials will benefit from reading about the culture of the adults who created them. We hope that those using the materials will be excited by the idea of exploring the culture of others and will be interested in creating materials to document their own customs, experience, knowledge, and traditions.

Exploring Culture
Recommended Reading

We Are West Philadelphians

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Brenner, Roslyn F. *Philadelphia: A Walking Tour.* NY: Camino Books, 1987.

Gallery, John Andrew, Ed. *Philadelphia Architecture: A Guide to the City.* MA: MIT Press, 1984.

Smith, Jane O. *Philadelphia One Day Trip Book.* NY: EPM Publishers, 1985.

Stiefel, Bernard. *Philadelphia Trivia Quiz.* Philadelphia, PA: Normandy Publishers, 1984.

Weigley, Russell F. *Philadelphia: A 300 Year History.* NY: Norton, 1982.

We Are Homeless

Apapas, Celsa. *We Do Not Want Any Other Home.* San Francisco, CA: Southwest Museum Press, 1965.

Greene, Bob. *Stranger at the Table.* New York: Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc., 1985.

Keilor, Garrison. *Leaving Home.* New York: Viking, Inc., 1987.

Kozel, Jonathan. *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless in America.* New York: Crown Publisher, Inc. 1988.

We Are In Recovery

Gunther, Max. "Alcoholism: A Medical Update." *Woman's Day Magazine*, May 1984.

Hawkins, David. *Preparing for the Drug-Free Years: A Family Activity Book*. Seattle: Developmental Research and Programs, Inc., 1988.

Perkins, W.M., and N. McMurtrie-Perkins. *Raising Drug-Free Kids in a Drug-Filled World*. MN: Hazelden, 1986.

Smith, Adam. *Everyday Drugs from Powers of Mind*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1975.

U.S. Department of Education. *A Parents Guide To Prevention: Growing Up Drug Free*. Washington, D. C., 1990.

We Are Black Women - This Is Our Struggle

Angaldua and Moraga, Ed. *This Bridge Called My Back, Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Seattle: Kitchen Table Press, 1983.

Dillens and Ward, Ed. *Black Southern Voices*. New York: Penguin Books, 1992.

Goss and Barnes, Ed. *Talk That Talk, An Anthology of African American Storytelling*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1989.

Naylor, Gloria. *The Women of Brewster Place*. New York: Penquin, 1983.

Walker, Alice. *Living by the Word*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, Inc., 1988.

Wallace, Michele. "A Black Feminist's Search for Sisterhood." *The Village Voice*, 28 July 1975.

We Are Grandmothers, Mothers, Daughters, And Sisters

Bernard, Jessie. *Women, Wives, Mothers: Values and Options.* Chicago: Aldine, 1975.

Greenfield and Little, Ed. *Childtimes: A Three Generation Memoir.* New York: Harper Trophy, 1983.

Hirsch, Marianne. "Mothers and Daughters." *Signs.* Vol. 7 (Autumn) 200-222, 1981.

McPhail, Fabienne. "Mothers and Daughters Talking Together." *Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women.* Vol. 4 (Fall) 53-56, 1987.

Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mother's Garden,* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, Inc., 1983.

We Are Dreamers

Drucker, Sally Ann. "Survivor." from *The World in Your Hands.* New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1990.

Giovanni, Nikki. "The Wonder Woman." from *My House, Poems.* New York: Quill, 1983.

Hughes, Langston. "Dreams." from *Selected Poems.* New York: Vintage, 1990.

Hughes, Langston. "Harlem." from *Selected Poems.* New York: Vintage, 1990.

Ouchi, William. "Why We Need To Learn." from *Theory Z.* Reading, MA: Addison Press, 1981.

Payan, Janice. "It's Up To Us." *Vital Speeches of the Day.* City News Publishing Company, No. 22, September 1990.

We Are Math Learners

Bryant, Nerissa and Hedgepeth, Loy. *Mathematics in Daily Living, Book 1*. Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1990.

Lassister, Karen. *Math Matters for Adults*. Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1993.

Mosenfelder, Donna. *Life Skills in Math*. New York: Educational Design, Inc., 1991.

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Treff, August and Jacobs, Donald. *Life Skills and Mathematics*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service, Inc., 1992.

We Are Learners of English

Acosta-Belen, Edna. *The Puerto Rican Woman*. New York: Praiger, 1979.

Aquino, Belinda. *The History of Filipino Women in Hawaii*. New York: Bridge: An Asian American Perspective, Spring 1979.

Bonet, Diana. *Easy English*. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications, 1993.

Corn, Alfred. *Learning the Words*. from *The World in Your Hands*. Likin, Solotaroff, Ed. New York: Harper Row Publishers, 1990.

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We Are Computer Users

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Collins, A. *Learning to Read and Write with Personal Computers.* Cambridge, MA: Bolt, Beranek and Newman, Inc., 1982

Daiute, Colette. *Writing and Computers.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publisher, 1985.

Turkle, S. *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit.* NY: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1984.

Zinsser, W. *Writing with a Word Processor.* New York: Harper and Row, 1988.

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Bernard-Johnston and Lyons-Quinn, Ed. *Skills for Success and Office Work.* Albany, New York: Delmar Publishers, Inc., 1991.

Clark and Mahaffy, Ed. *You're Hired: Charting Your Career Path.* Chicago: Contemporary Books, Inc., 1992.

Jamieson and O'Mara, Ed. *Managing Workforce 2000.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1991.

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